



**Japan's Nuclear Bargain:
The Making of a Nuclear Hedging Posture**

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INTRODUCTION

Japan's Nuclear Conundrum

Puzzle and purpose of this work:

“A country that potentially has a nuclear-weapons option by virtue of its civilian nuclear programme can be said to have nuclear latency. If the physical condition of latency is accompanied by a political intention to have such an option, it is known as nuclear hedging. You might call it nuclear latency with an attitude,” writes Mark Fitzpatrick in a IISS blog post in 2014.¹ Japan is an interesting case for scholars who study nuclear hedging. It is clearly a candidate for nuclear proliferation, because of its reprocessing and enrichment capabilities. However, the political intent that would accompany its status of nuclear latency has been proved to be very difficult to assess. As it will be shown later on in this section, several authors have attempted to find traces of political intent in the Japanese nuclear policy, making the question a real conundrum. “What are the parameters that make Japan closer to a nuclear hedging state?,” “How will Japan solve its plutonium stockpiling problem?” are the most common questions that political scientists and think tank experts have looked at. There is, however, an important turning point in Japan’s nuclear history that could offer an explanation to the country’s peculiar nuclear hedging

¹Mark Fitzpatrick, “Nuclear Latency with an Attitude,” October 7, 2014 <https://www.iiss.org/en/politics%20and%20strategy/blogsections/2014-d2de/october-931b/nuclear-latency-c8a6>; see also by the same author: *Asia's Latent Nuclear Powers – Japan, South Korea and Taiwan*, IISS, 2016

stance. It is the “Nuclear Bargain” that Japan made in the early to mid-1950s between introducing nuclear energy and rejecting nuclear weapons, which then shaped the country’s postwar nuclear policy. It is a bargain, because it happened at the same moment in time in the country’s history and Japan acquired an item while relinquishing another. This bargain also engendered Japan’s nuclear culture, whose characteristics this work will also examine. This dissertation’s mission will thus be to explain what elements have consolidated Japan’s nuclear hedging posture by examining the “Nuclear Bargain” that Japan made in the 1950s and its continuity into the post Cold-War era.

Disentangling Japan’s nuclear policy, indeed, is no easy task. The “Four-Pillars Nuclear Policy” (*Kaku Yon Seisaku*), introduced by former Prime Minister Eisaku Satō in 1968 as a wider framework for the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, perfectly illustrates the discrepancies embedded in the Japanese nuclear policy, and represents a good starting point for understanding the many complexities of this issue. As the only country that has experienced nuclear attacks on its own soil, Japan officially positions itself as a nuclear victim (*hibakukoku*) and considers the “Three Non-Nuclear Principles” as the cornerstone of its non-nuclear policy (the first pillar). The Three Non-Nuclear Principles first appeared in the Diet Record on December 8, 1967, when Komeitō Dietman Yoshikatsu Takeiri requested clarifications on the possibility of maintaining them after the Bonin Islands will be returned to Japan.² Three days later, on December 11, Eisaku Satō asserted during a session at the Diet that Japan will not possess, nor produce, nor permit the introduction of nuclear weapons into its own territory, thus declaring for the first time Japan’s official non-nuclear stance.³

² Kokkai Kaigiroku (Diet Record), 12-08-1967: <http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/>

³ Kokkai Kaigiroku (Diet Record), 12-11-1967:

As the division in the Four-Pillars Nuclear Policy suggests, in fact, the Japanese government, with the help of the United States, completely separated Japan's efforts in favor of a civilian nuclear program from military nuclear issues from the very beginning in the early 1950s, both in policy terms as well as from a broader, collective imagination standpoint. This sharp distinction has had a significant impact on how nuclear issues have been perceived until now, and how Japan's nuclear policy has dealt with creating a nuclear hedging stance. Japan's nuclear *kokuze* (national policy) assigns exclusively peaceful purposes to the country's atomic energy program (the second pillar), but the political rhetoric on the nuclear option and the government's past nuclear studies always introduce doubts on Japan's commitment to this *kokuze*. Moreover, Japan's role in promoting disarmament (the third pillar) is sometimes seen by neighboring countries and domestic peace activists as hypocritical, as the country also heavily relies on the extended nuclear deterrence (END) provided by the United States (the fourth pillar). This work will thus attempt to bring together these compartmentalized items that constitute the Four Pillars of Japan's nuclear policy, and in turn identify four main elements that have engendered and consolidated Japan's long-standing nuclear hedging posture. The four elements that this work will study (outlined later in this Introduction) will help understand how the lines between these compartments are blurred, and the Four Pillars are in fact connected to one another to form an effective nuclear hedging stance.

Nuclear historiography:

Hiroshima, “special” weapons, evolving strategic environments, and nuclear culture

Joseph Stalin told nuclear physicist Igor Kurchatov in the middle of August 1945 that “Hiroshima has shaken the whole world. The balance has been destroyed.”⁴ After the bombing of the Japanese city on August 6, 1945, Stalin had realized the magnitude of the atomic bomb, and that a new factor had entered into international relations.

Indeed, Hiroshima represents the point of no return of the history of nuclear weapons: it marks the dramatic culmination and end of the war, while at the same time it symbolizes the beginning of an era of nuclear fear. Hiroshima was certainly a shocking event to many leaders across the world because it showed the magnitude of the political power of nuclear weapons. The message that the Hiroshima bombing issued to the world was that whoever possessed those special weapons would prove to be militarily superior, thus turning such weapons into the passport to survive and potentially win the Cold War.

The notion of nuclear weapons as special weapons is indeed quite common in the literature of nuclear arms. Kenneth N. Waltz, in his famous decade-long debate with Scott D. Sagan, acknowledges that nuclear weapons are in fact highly destructive and therefore different from conventional ones because of their catastrophic nature, which gives them a very powerful deterrent effect. This in turn strengthens the states’ reluctance to attack or to act altogether, because the presence of nuclear weapons makes the expected costs of belligerent behavior much higher. Waltz uses Cold War references to illustrate his point: “[t]hink of Kennedy and Khrushchev in the Cuban missile crisis. Why fight if you can’t

⁴ David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb – The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939-1956*, Yale University Press, 1994, p. 132

win much and might lose everything?”⁵ Another important difference between conventional and nuclear worlds is the degree of predictability of the result of wars. The outcome of conventional battles has proven to be hard to foresee, which makes leaders engage in offensive behavior more easily and frequently. That happens when countries are armed with conventional weapons, because they can risk going to war even if the advantages of a potential victory are not exceptionally good, and because they know that even in defeat, the damage will be limited. A nuclear scenario, on the contrary, calls for a very different reasoning: because the costs of a defeat would be annihilating and the suffering and damage would be unlimited and predictable in a nuclear war, countries will avoid going to war with one another. Caution, indeed, is a key notion in Waltz’s argument, as he links it to the notion of rationality. The neorealist author assumes that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by a state will induce said state to act with extreme caution, thus putting it under strong pressure to act rationally. That is why, according to Waltz, a nuclear Iraq would not have caused instability, but rather peace and safety: “a nuclear arsenal in Saddam’s possession would have been relatively safe.”⁶ That is explained by the fact that autocratic leaders tend to seek control and would not share their control with other actors such as terrorists, which makes these “rogue states” behave in a “very unitary and controlled fashion.”⁷ Consequently, according to Waltz, nuclear weapons’ strong deterrent effect is the only use nuclear weapons have.

At the end of their debate, the authors each offer an interesting insight on the “Nuclear Zero” option advocated by President Obama in the 2009 Prague speech. Waltz

⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz and Scott D. Sagan, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons – An Enduring Debate* (Third Ed.), W.W. Norton & Company, 2013, p. 7

⁶ Ibid., p. 184

⁷ Ibid.

states that the nuclear age has only brought peace and a way for nuclear states to “enjoy their protection.” He even asserts, in a rather provocative fashion: “Those who like peace should love nuclear weapons.”⁸ The author explains that such weapons are a league of their own, precisely because they have no use: “[t]hey are the only weapons ever invented that work decisively against their own use”. He takes India and Pakistan as an example of prolonged peace: “that countries with nuclear capabilities do not fight wars against one another is a lesson we should have learned by now.”⁹ Waltz’s argument is understandable and may be flawless on a purely theoretical level and in an ideal world free of any historical experiences, but it completely misses the point of the reasons why the presence itself, let alone the spread of nuclear weapons is greatly troublesome, especially in a constantly unstable environment like the post-9/11 era. Therefore, although completely logical in a world where international actors are rational states, if applied to the real contemporary world, Waltz’s argument sounds stiff and somehow fails to acknowledge the major changes that the post-Cold War order has brought about. Moreover, the consistency of his argument throughout the book is highly disputable, as he mostly relies on the fact that no nuclear wars had broken out so far, which would prove that nuclear weapons have had a stabilizing effect to the world. Every historical example he offers to back up his argument is interchangeable and essentially the same: if nuclear states did not go to war with one another, it must mean that nuclear weapons have played a refraining role. However, he fails to prove how, among all factors that have contributed to avoiding wars, nuclear weapons are the one element above everything else that was able to keep conflicts away. Besides, another confusing point in Waltz’s analysis is the concept of “peace”, which in his

⁸ Ibid., p. 223

⁹ Ibid., p. 158

argument is deeply misleading. Can we safely say that absence of wars is a synonym of a peaceful world? Nuclear weapons may have played a role in keeping the Cold War cold, but a world of constant tensions and fear is far from being a world of peace. Settling for a state of “absence of wars” is certainly not the most desirable result that policy should aim for and, although Waltz’s argument might explain how nuclear weapons could give theoretical stability, it lacks actual policy foresight. When it comes to nuclear weapons, Waltz’s theoretical thinking is useful to prevent the breaking out of more wars in a world where nuclear weapons still exist, but it seems like the author is never willing to move beyond a comfortable short-term solution. Therefore, he fails to make the ultimate step that connects his purely theoretical thinking to the reality of a world nuclear weapons where actors are multiple, evolving, diverse, and unpredictable, which greatly undermines his reasoning.

Scott D. Sagan’s approach on the consequences of nuclear proliferation, on the other hand, sounds more realistic and up-to-date, mainly because the author has an organizational view of the contemporary international scene, thus taking into account a combination of factors and, most importantly, the unpredictability of action that comes with human agency. Sagan, indeed, has a completely different starting point: according to him, nuclear weapons are not controlled by abstract entities such as states, but rather by “normal, imperfect individuals and normal, self-interested organizations within the state”, which often leads to “deterrence failures and deliberate or accidental nuclear war.”¹⁰ This lens gives the whole issue of nuclear proliferation a more thorough, complex, and multidimensional perspective. The organizational lens helps understand why, according to

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 200

Sagan, the spread of nuclear weapons is only going to bring more instability: the more actors moving within the contemporary political scenario, the more probabilities exist that something could go wrong. Unlike Waltz, Sagan does not focus on whether a state's government did or did not acquire nuclear weapons, but also analyzes the different reasons and background of such decisions, which is a more convincing and in-depth approach. Regarding the Iraqi case, for example, Sagan uses Saddam Hussein's secret speech transcript to show that leaders are often not sensible and trust "[their] own mystical intuition more than objective intelligence reports,"¹¹ which echoes David Holloway's findings about the Soviet elites. Saddam's "pathological decision-making style," according to Sagan, was further displayed when it was proved that he was seeking a nuclear deterrent so that he could engage in conventional war more effectively. Saddam's behavior, therefore, is a warning sign that nuclear weapons sometimes do not serve a deterrent function, thus rejecting Waltz's argument about nuclear deterrence bringing more stability. North Korea is also a very complex and unique case, a mix of traditional Asian dynastic kingdom and a strict communist government. Sagan states that Waltz is downplaying North Korea's degree of aggression in recent years, and notes that nothing indicates that its behavior is going to be more cautious as it becomes a stronger and more assertive state. He also mentions historical "near-misses" that almost caused a nuclear war. According to Sagan, these episodes go to show that nuclear hazards are always lurking, thus making the world a very unstable place. Interestingly, Waltz and Sagan have contrasting interpretations of the same historical examples of near-misses: while the former sees the resulting absence of war as a positive sign, the latter views it as a gloomy reminder that the possibility of

¹¹ Ibid., p. 202

nuclear war is always present.

Furthermore, Sagan does not underestimate the possibility of terrorists stealing nuclear capabilities, which is a vital element to include in the equation when reasoning about the use and spread of nuclear weapons, especially in the 21st century. He rightly mentions the example of the Japanese doomsday cult Aum Shinrikyo that carried out the Tokyo subway attacks by using sarin-gas in March 1995 only after a few failed attempts to obtain the material for nuclear weapons. The fact that the cult was not able to access nuclear weapons back in the 1990s does not mean that we can rest on our laurels in this post-9/11 world. Sagan also criticizes Waltz for exaggerating “the peace-inducing effect of nuclear weapons.”¹² The point that Sagan later makes about president Barack Obama’s statements on nuclear disarmament is also convincing: while Waltz finds that the president’s statements are mostly contradictory and hypocritical, Sagan explains that Obama was, with a touch of realism, merely acknowledging that nuclear disarmament should be done multilaterally, and that it will not be completed overnight. In fact, President Obama’s Prague statement in April 2009, and then his speech in Hiroshima in May 2016, are significant, if only symbolic so far, milestones for nuclear disarmament and eventually for nuclear abolition. The road to a nuclear zero is undeniably long and an uphill battle in many ways, and Waltz’s reasoning also does its part in obstructing it – throughout the book, he ignores an important fact that president Obama used to open his Hiroshima speech with: that mankind possesses the means to destroy itself. And it takes one small accident or a terrorist attack not only to make the world more unstable, but to irreversibly change and destroy mankind, which is a far greater issue that concerns every single human being in the

¹² Ibid., p. 225

world. It is therefore puzzling and slightly awkward that the book ends with Waltz's response acknowledging the existence of terrorists, but defining them "weak" because they would be "incapable of rending the fabric of society and of occupying and administering territory."¹³ Waltz seems to imply that as long as terrorists are not a state or a widespread group, they do not represent a major threat to humanity and to the peoples. However, having to live with the fear that anyone could obtain loose nuclear material cannot be a state of peace, or even stability. And since it is becoming easier for terrorist leaders to conceal their identity and their location, the spread – hence the accessibility – of nuclear weapons cannot, in any way, bring global stability.

Going beyond the acknowledgment that nuclear weapons are special types of weapons, Nina Tannenwald observes that the Hiroshima bombing also had the effect of defining nuclear weapons as "abhorrent and unacceptable weapons of mass destruction, with a taboo on their use."¹⁴ This contributed to the debate on the moral implications of the use of nuclear weapons. Tannenwald's norm constructivist approach to the meaning of Hiroshima offers the refreshing perspective that after the first and only use of the bomb over Japan, a nuclear taboo has risen among people, which refrained the use of such weapons in any other circumstances throughout the Cold War and beyond. According to the author, the nuclear taboo indicates "a de facto prohibition against the first use of nuclear weapons." The taboo, indeed, is "not the behavior (of nonuse) itself but rather the normative belief about the behavior."¹⁵ The special and unique character of nuclear weapons is emphasized in her work, because the idea of using the bomb is associated with

¹³ Ibid., p. 228

¹⁴ Nina Tannenwald, "Stigmatizing the Bomb: Origins of the Nuclear Taboo." *International Security*, vol. 29, no. 4, 2005, pp. 5–49

¹⁵ Ibid., p.8

the notion that there is no turning back after that use. The author chooses the phrase “bright line” norm to express this idea of no return: “once the threshold between use and nonuse is crossed, one is immediately in a new world with all the unimaginable consequences that could follow.”¹⁶

Tannenwald’s 1999 argument on the nuclear taboo stemming from the analysis of common beliefs about nuclear weapons complements another original work that was published in 1998, *Nuclear Mentalities? Strategies and Beliefs in Britain, France, and the FRG* by Beatrice Heuser.

In *Nuclear Mentalities?* Beatrice Heuser tackles the topic of nuclear strategy from an interesting angle: the purpose of the book is to prove that the study of the political culture each country stems from is an essential element to understand their nuclear preferences. To prove this correlation, Heuser studies the cases of three countries: Britain, France, and the FRG. Each chapter of the book analyzes one of the three countries chosen by Heuser; each attempts to reconstruct the country’s political culture, which in turn explains why it had made specific choices as far as nuclear strategy is concerned.

The author briefly defines the phrase “nuclear mentalities” at the beginning of the book, and postulates that the way a strategy is formulated and wars are fought is a direct function of the country’s political system and political culture. She remarks, indeed, that the comparison between the three countries’ nuclear strategies clearly shows considerable differences, which is rather surprising, given that they all share similar economic resources, a common belief in democracy, their membership to NATO, the same geographical space, etc. Heuser then provides a short list of the sources she used to reconstruct the political

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 8

culture of each country, pointing out her emphasis on the sources that deal with nuclear strategy. She also clarifies that the élites she considered for her analysis do not include only politicians, government officials, journalists, military men, and academics, but also priests and pastors, as well as activists and protest groups. The author also explains her choice of looking at political pronouncements and public discourse: whenever a speech, a debate, or a statement is aimed at the public, it is likely to contain images, allusions to beliefs, and references assumed to be held in common.

Starting with Britain, the author attempts to pinpoint the elements in British political culture, throughout the decades, that shaped nuclear strategy. The most relevant finding is that there is constant concern among the British to keep their great power role, and they are always reluctant to accept the loss of this status. According to the author, there is also a widespread recognition of the fact that Britain cannot operate alone in military matters, and that the United States, as a greater power than Britain, is a positive ally that can increase British strength. NATO is thus considered as the main mechanism that would allow the country to keep its power role and realize its national security interests. Isolation from the rest of Europe, posits Heuser, was never an option for the British, and British strategists always made sure to emphasize the importance of alliance solidarity and interdependence. The author also shows not only that the British elites at all times felt vulnerable vis-à-vis nuclear attacks by the Soviet Union, but also that they truly believed Britain was the number one target of the USSR. Even up to the 1980s, these elites seemed to believe that Britain was an exceptionally vulnerable country in terms of nuclear attacks. This nuclear exceptionality thus made them think that nuclear weapons were an efficient

deterrent – some even claimed that “nuclear weapons had abolished *all* war.”¹⁷ However, Heuser points out, the British elites were always seen with suspicion by the masses, which somehow makes British thinking fragmented, because the peace movement had a deep-rooted anti-Establishment feeling. An interesting passage in the chapter focuses on Britons’ idealistic self-perception as a nation. Britain has always seen herself as “the world’s peace-maker,” and British defense efforts were deeply rooted in the British sense of role-identity and of wider responsibility. In other words, concludes the author, “Britons saw themselves as the ‘noble Sir Galahad’ of the international order (...). Britain’s self-perception obliged her to continue her quest for a unique role, like the pursuit of the Holy Grail.”¹⁸

The second part of the book, titled “France: the Nuclear Monarchy”, deals with the French experience. The key feature of the French nuclear mentality is that it is ruled by metaphysics, a rather cryptic assertion at first, but that coincides with the great faith that the French have always felt for their country’s sovereignty and independence. Independence, indeed, has become a greatly popular concept in French thinking and the main guideline for French defense policy. This concept was thus symbolized by nuclear weapons, which were considered by the governments since De Gaulle as the main deterrent that allowed the country to preserve its integrity and sovereignty. Therefore, the French have never been concerned with defining clearly the threat they were trying to deter: instead of focusing on operational arguments, the nuclear debate in France has been ruled by “metaphysical and metastrategic considerations.”¹⁹ Furthermore, despite not having a defined threat in its policy, France has mostly regarded its own force de frappe as an arsenal

¹⁷ Beatrice Heuser, *Nuclear Mentalities? Strategies and Beliefs in Britain, France, and the FRG*, Palgrave MacMillan, 1998, p. 10

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 49

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 142

directed against the USSR, but also against German revanchism, and US dominance. As General Le Borgne wrote, before being instruments of death, nuclear weapons are “instruments of truth” which will test the true nature and quality of the Franco-German relationship.²⁰ As for the United States, some analysts have observed that both the Americans and the French see themselves as “chosen people”, hence the claims of universal leadership as well as competitive feelings between each other. This strong rivalry was still alive at the beginning of the 21st century, where George W. Bush’s America and Jacques Chirac’s France had drastically divergent views on war on terror, while Tony Blair’s Britain followed the US lead. Heuser remarks in fact that the US support Britain’s nuclear weapons but not France’s because “the British listen to the Americans.”²¹ It is particularly interesting to note the salience of Charles De Gaulle’s figure in building the simple yet powerful myth that nuclear weapons were the panacea against the decline of French grandeur, and against internal fragmentation. Although the myth first created some disagreement, especially among politicians on the Left, this redefinition of national interests through and around nuclear weapons eventually gained great support to De Gaulle’s nuclear doctrine, and French nuclear weapons became the symbol of power and status. The keyword for the French nuclear thinking is therefore “prestige”, and the centralized power in the hands of the President perfectly illustrates the symbolism of the “nuclear monarchy”. In fact, even before the first French nuclear weapons became operational, De Gaulle secured himself, as the President, the right to authorize their use. This is indeed a unique feature of French nuclear thinking: nuclear decisions ought to be made by a single person, which is an idea that has stuck until the late 20th century. That is

²⁰ Ibid., p. 109

²¹ Ibid., p. 110

why France had always been skeptical of a European nuclear force and of multinational nuclear decision-making. We can add that indeed, if Louis XIV was considered a “Roi thaumaturge” (a King who was able to work magic and miracles), nuclear weapons gave the President a touch of the divine, because of the destructive nature of such weapons. Because of the attribution of great power in the hands of the President, the charismatic figure of De Gaulle is often incorrectly associated to the decision to arm France of nuclear weapons. Moreover, the author rightly points out that because De Gaulle and the State often overlap in French thinking, it is still problematic to criticize De Gaulle in France, for it would be taken as criticism to the State itself. The French case is called “nuclear monarchy”, also because the Presidents who succeeded De Gaulle worked hard to emulate him and, in a way, to continue the French glorious past: even Socialist President François Mitterrand was called “Dieu,” and was quoted saying: “La dissuasion...c’est moi,” a revisited phrase attributed to Louis XIV (“L’Etat...c’est moi”). Most importantly, France has always considered her nuclear weapons the perfect deterrent that would protect her from all sorts of threats and from any war. Heuser even affirms that nuclear weapons are believed to be the “magic that would keep the war at bay.”²² That is why, the idea that war will never occur because of the very existence of nuclear weapons is deep-rooted in French thinking. This resonates with Heigo Satō’s definition of Japan’s Three Non-Nuclear Principles as the “protective amulet (*omamori*)” in the Japanese public’s perception.²³ Few in France think that the President would actually use nuclear weapons, because their presence guarantees stability and peace: even the Socialist defense academic Pascal Boniface’s *Vive La Bombe*, published in 1992, pleaded in favor of maintaining nuclear

²² Ibid., p. 143

²³ Heigo Satō, author’s interview, February 20, 2018

weapons as a stabilizing force. This is intertwined with the question of French identity, and the fear of metaphysic destruction more than just fear of physical destruction by nuclear weapons. It is therefore the metaphysical survival of France that is the most crucial for the French: the moral, political, historical annihilation would be seen as a worse humiliation than only physical destruction. Heuser concludes the chapter by comparing De Gaulle's nuclear creed with a drug that healed the French into thinking that France has risen back to a great superpower again, and asks herself whether this would mean lessening the emphasis on the role of nuclear weapons.

The third section of Heuser's book focuses on the Federal Republic of Germany. As the title of the chapter, "Sin and Redemption", suggests, West Germany has been in search of a new identity – a radical break from the past that looks for redemption from the crimes of the Third Reich and for re-integration within the international community. Heuser rightly mentions the unique side of Germany's political culture: Germany's profound mistrust of herself and overwhelming fears of military power have turned Germany into an insecure nation as far as defense policy was concerned, as well as an often divided country in defense matters. Even though the majority of the German elites supported NATO nuclear strategy, Germans' uneasy feeling of guilt and fear of military power always lingered. German anti-nuclear demonstrators in 1960 were sporting banners with "First Belgen-Belsen, now Bergen-Hohne", notes the author, which shows how nuclear weapons were publicly considered a symbol of mass destruction, just as the Nazi genocide. Indeed, opposition to nuclear weapons was seen as rejection of German rearmament, and, in a way, echoes Japan's particularly high sensitivity on nuclear matters. The issue of nuclear weapons has even a religious side, which the chapter is based on: crime and punishment,

sinfulness and atonement are entwined, in the German experience. Although in the case of Germany, the Christian movement was also involved in opposing re-armament and nuclear weapons, this resonates with the Japanese feeling towards nuclear weapons. “Religious” was indeed the exact word Japanese special envoy to the United States, “Mr. Inagaki,” used to describe the national feeling towards nuclear weapons in March 1957.²⁴ Another feature in common between Japan and Germany is the women’s role in fighting nuclear weapons, but it is striking that in the case of Germany, according to Heuser, these activists’ speeches were full of hysteria, emotional lyricism and figures of speech that were similar to the ones used by religious leaders. West Germany’s loyalty to NATO, just as the UK’s, is unquestionable, remarks Heuser: the alliance network has been seen as a cornerstone of German defense policy, and putting the Alliance at risk is often considered as endangering Germany’s security. The US, moreover, is the pillar that provides guidance to West Germany also because, the author adds, Germans “tend not to trust themselves.”²⁵ Germans particularly appreciated the moral guidance of the US, and the American postwar optimism was considered as something to emulate. They took pride in being America’s “prize pupils,” and worked hard to become America’s most loyal allies. The US was the symbol of a bright future because of the acrimonious history of intra-European relations and France’s and UK’s weakened positions in postwar Europe. The purpose of Heuser’s book is innovative because it combines nuclear strategy, which has often been considered objective and rational,²⁶ with a more subjective and irrational side that takes the form of

²⁴ Memorandum of Conversation between “Mr. Inagaki” and R. L. Sneider, Subject: “Red Wing Claims”, March 15, 1957, Record Group 59, Declassification Review Project NND 917353, Box 10, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD

²⁵ Beatrice Heuser, *ibid.*, p. 216

²⁶ For a depiction of how rational and “sanitized” nuclear strategy is perceived, see Carol Cohn, “Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals,” *Chicago Journals*, University of Chicago Press, Summer 1987

belief-systems, myths, and symbols. This perspective demonstrates that a country's national interests, especially when nuclear weapons come into play, require a deep understanding of its political culture that has developed over many years. As the author states in her conclusion, the book shows that political culture serves indeed as a very useful analytical key to understand nuclear policy. Heuser's book is a central piece of literature that supports the methodology of the present work on Japan's nuclear policy. Political culture, historical patterns, and cultural symbols are in fact part of the lens that this work will use to disentangle Japan's complex nuclear policy. The attempt of Heuser's book to link one country's whole world of symbols and beliefs that was built throughout the centuries with the nuclear choices in the 20th century is especially fascinating. As Akira Iriye explains, "[a] nation is a culture in that its inhabitants share certain consciousness – of their land, of their history, of who they are."²⁷ The present work, and Chapter III in particular, will borrow the cultural lens to look at the perpetuation of Japanese nuclear energy culture, and how myths, symbols and beliefs have played a crucial role in consolidating the country's nuclear hedging stance.

Another book that also inspired the present work's approach is Gabrielle Hecht's *The Radiance of France* (2009). In *The Radiance of France*, Hecht tackles the issue of nuclear power from a unique point of view: much like Beatrice Heuser, the author entwines it with the question of national identity. Unlike Heuser, however, Hecht focuses on both nuclear power and nuclear weapons, and on one country, France, analyzing what she calls "technopolitics:" the process by which technical decisions are made through mere political considerations. The book indeed attempts to demonstrate that France's nuclear power

²⁷ Akira Iriye, "Culture and International History," in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, Cambridge University Press, edited by Michael Hogan, 2004, pp. 241-256

choices were not made because of some specific French characteristics, but, on the contrary, because of the introduction of nuclear power, France has become the country it is now. In other words, “Nuclear power ‘happened’ to French society like an adventure happens to the hero of a novel and alters the course of his life.”²⁸ According to the author, therefore, the engineering choices made by France regarding the development of French nuclear power has shaped the country’s identity and “must be understood as part of a struggle to define Frenchness in the postwar world.”²⁹

Nuclear power has become reason of national pride in France, and is so closely tied to the notion of prestige and especially of independence that criticizing the national nuclear policy has overlapped with criticizing the State. This echoes what Beatrice Heuser mentioned in *Nuclear Mentalities?*, arguing that because De Gaulle and the State often overlap in French thinking, it is still challenging to criticize De Gaulle in France, for it would be taken as criticism to the State itself. This explains why Gabrielle Hecht has encountered difficulties in accessing industry and government documents in France, thus basing the book mostly on interviews with former employees.

Nuclear power, indeed, has rapidly become the way France as a nation achieved a status of prestigious power after the disgrace of World War II: the term “radiance”, while conveying brightness, pleasant glow, as well as a sense of happiness in English, can also have a more technical meaning that designates radiation in French. The overlapping meanings of the word thus perfectly describe the merging of the French technological achievement and the rewarding sense of pride, happiness, and prestige that it brings about. Moreover, it is

²⁸ Gabrielle Hecht, *The Radiance of France: Nuclear Power and National Identity After World War II*, MIT Press, 2009, xiii

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3

possible to draw an interesting comparison with the eagerness of postwar Japan to introduce nuclear power as an important pillar of its economic and technological progress, which was taken by the élites as a significant step forward from the political point of view. Also in the case of Japan, as Chapter II of the present work will show, the introduction of nuclear power meant reclaiming a higher status in global politics. What the author skillfully does in her book is that she highlights how the burning desire for higher technological achievement actually reflects an intention of gaining advantage and even dominion over other countries and international actors.

In the past fifty years, French politicians have placed great faith in nuclear technology, with De Gaulle accelerating the national nuclear program when he returned to power in the late 1950s, thus making nuclear power coincide with return of French grandeur. An example in the book that illustrates how the technical considerations are closely linked to political goals is the choice of the nuclear fuel loading system made in the early 1960s. The system that France eventually chose was the one that was deemed best for its technical characteristics: it ensured regular and rapid production of weapons-grade plutonium, thus leaving the military option open. The military aspect of the Marcoule nuclear site was no secret, recounts Hecht, as the engineers and technicians were enthusiastic and excited about the military potential their worksite had. The passage shows how despite the clear distinction between the military and the civil uses of atomic energy, the two sides are, at the same time, strongly interlinked: “Without these Marcoule reactors, France could have never exploded its first bomb so quickly.”³⁰ Therefore, the nuclear power plant designed for France is at the core of technopolitics, and serves a twofold purpose: it is both a

³⁰ Ibid., p. 74

technical system built for electricity and plutonium production, and a political device capable of developing an atomic bomb whenever needed.

The overlapping aspect between technological prowess and national grandeur is very real and is illustrated by a 1957 promotional video commissioned by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The footage opens with images of Versailles and the quote “the grandeur of a State rests on its arts and manufactures,” and goes on to show the development of postwar French industry and technology. The link between the two elements is emphasized countless times throughout the video, which closes with a preview of the burgeoning nuclear program, described as the latest and most promising accomplishment of the French nation. In the upcoming era, the nuclear plants would be a symbol of the greatness of France as much as the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe or Notre-Dame was.³¹ The so-called Frenchness was a crucial characteristic of the French nuclear program, as proved by the promotion by the Commissariat à l’Energie Atomique (CEA) of a “*filière française*”, a gas-graphite reactor, as opposed to the light-water American and the heavy-water Canadian versions.

Again, a parallel can be drawn with the Japanese postwar experience, where the élites were extremely enthusiastic and proud about Japan’s growing nuclear program, as Chapter II will show. In 1957, the same year that France was promoting its own civil nuclear program, a 24-page long editorial appeared on September 30 on the *Asahi Evening News*, which explained in great detail the nuts and bolts of the newly acquired reactor, but also enthusiastically endorsed and promoted the peacefully nuclear future of the country (“Japan will now have the chance to overtake nations advanced in the researches of atomic

³¹ Ibid., p. 43, p. 214

energy”; “Japan’s responsibility to use her technical skill for the betterment of the Asian living standard and for the happiness of the Asian people should not be neglected”).³² The two cases have obviously major differences, especially in that Japan was explicitly counting on British and American help and was seeking advantage mostly in the regional context at that time. However, one can still note that also in the case of Japan, development of a domestic nuclear program had equally a deep impact on the shaping of policy-making up until today.

The passage on France’s development of the Bomb is particularly fascinating and further consolidates the link between technological primacy and political prestige. In 1958, Prime Minister Félix Gaillard announced the building of the atomic bomb as national policy goal. As the country detonated its first nuclear weapon on February 13th, 1960, De Gaulle, who in the meantime had returned to power and played a great role in accelerating the nuclear program, announced the success at L’Ecole Polytechnique and emphasized how this step would show the whole world the value of French technologists and considerably reinforced French position. That detonation had thus erased the humiliation of 1940. Hecht, indeed, explains that De Gaulle, like the technologists and the planners, associated France’s political and economic weakness with scientific and technological backwardness. This is still very much alive in today’s French widespread popular belief regarding school system: being good at scientific subjects at school, and later belonging to one of the many grandes écoles that forge the future scientists and engineers of France is still considered to be more prestigious than having studied for a Bachelor of Arts. Because science, technology, and engineering have a direct and deep connection to diplomatic advantage, working in one of

³² Copy of the *Asahi Evening News*, September 30, 1957, Record Group 59, Declassification Review Project NND 877404, Box 5097, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD

these fields is understood as being able of changing French politics and the country's international standing.

It is noteworthy that both the first atomic detonation in 1960 and the civil nuclear program developed in the 1950s were viewed in France as equally important as other historically French symbols as Notre-Dame or the Eiffel Tower. Far from erasing the glorious historical past, the French nuclear efforts were seen as the next logical step towards a rising greatness in the postwar era. The nuclear industry, moreover, was even considered the solution of all economic problems and was described countless times by the press in the mid-1950s as the “potential or actual savior” of the region.³³ Nuclear power, indeed, has become an inherent and natural part of France's identity, as the author concludes, and has ended up deriving 75 percent or more of its electricity from nuclear power. Hecht goes as far as describing nuclear technologies are becoming “naturalized”: they came to seem a normal, inevitable part of the nation, and “they grew inextricably tied to its nature and landscape.”³⁴ This deep interdependence makes France an exceptional case to observe and it will be interesting to study the legacy and the lessons that this unique French nuclear experience will provide in the future.

Hecht's work is an original and very well-researched contribution that combines the detailed and complex technical explanations of nuclear reactors with an extremely interesting analytical part that manages to describe the evolution of French national identity as a function of nuclear power. The lack of industrial and government documents in the author's research is largely compensated by the detailed and spontaneous account of her encounters and interviews with CEA engineers and other former employees in the industry.

³³ Ibid., p. 215

³⁴ Ibid., p. 376

The concept of “technopolitics” that Hecht describes throughout the book can be found in the historical experience several countries, but she has rightly chosen France, where this concept is taken to an extreme. In Beatrice Heuser’s *Nuclear Mentalities?*, the chapter “France: the Nuclear Monarchy” is the most intriguing perhaps because it was echoed by Hecht’s research: the allusion to Louis XIV, the importance of French sovereignty and independence, the metaphysical that intertwines national grandeur and technology, French postwar revanchism for a renewed national glory. Although Heuser’s description of French nuclear mentality was original, however, Hecht’s decision to thoroughly include both sides of the nuclear issue is more persuasive – the comparative structure of Heuser’s work was perhaps a disadvantage in this sense. Hecht’s demonstration of the great synergies between technology and politics was indeed very convincing, and the relationship between power and the prestige that the nuclear realm emanates in France resonates with a quote by former President Nicolas Sarkozy’s wife Carla Bruni, who was reported saying “I want a man with nuclear power.”³⁵

Conducting research in Japan and literature on Japan’s nuclear policy

The culture of filing and managing archival documents is still relatively recent in Japan, and the search of pertinent Japanese diplomatic documents can be in fact very discouraging. Nonetheless, in the past twenty years, the Japanese government has been making efforts in declassifying a larger quantity of documents, and now regularly declassifies them several times a year. 2009 marked a somewhat important turning point

³⁵ *Financial Times*, January 22, 2014

for researchers interested in exploring the Japanese archives. The change of administration from Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), who pledged to promote a more transparent bureaucratic policy, is partly the reason why the government started disclosing more document to the public.³⁶ Prior to that, there were no rules that established the filing of governmental documents, and ministers and bureaucrats were free to keep or destroy the documents.³⁷ The National Archives of Japan (*Kokuritsu Kōbunshokan*) in Tokyo, established in 1971, offers a multitude of historical documents on the history of Japan, but it is not the best place to look for documents pertaining to nuclear history, as it mostly contains documents related to arts and culture. The archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is indeed a better place to find diplomatic documents. As Mayumi Fukushima observes, since the news that Japan allowed US nuclear submarines into Japanese territory during the Cold War, and after the Fukushima Daiichi accident, more journalists have been requesting the release of documents related to nuclear policy, which makes it a little more accessible to conduct research on this topic. However, it still takes up to a year to receive an official decision over the disclosure of a classified document. I cannot say my research experience at those archives was very fruitful at those institutions.³⁸ While true that the quantity of treaties, government letters, and telegrams related to overseas missions and a range of different topics is quite impressive, the majority of these documents are low classification documents pertaining to logistics of a mission or other unimportant details. Capturing personal thoughts or impressions of government officials

³⁶ Mayumi Fukushima, “Accessing the Diplomatic and Military Archives in Japan,” *H-Diplo*, October 16, 2015

³⁷ NHK documentary, “Hiroku Nicchō Kōshō – Shirarezaru “Kaku” no Kōbō” (The secret relationship: the hidden negotiations between Japan and North Korea over the nuclear question and the defense-offense issue), November 8, 2009

³⁸ Mayumi Fukushima, *op.cit.*

on determined events or issues in a consistent way was therefore not possible for this work, due to the fact that internal memos prepared for discussion between different MOFA bureaus are omitted from declassified files. Therefore, assessing the political intent with regards to Japan's latent nuclear capabilities was not possible. Most archival documents cited in this work therefore stem from US archives, which give a good perspective of American views and accounts of Japanese politics and events concerning Japan.

However, the secondary sources found at the National Diet Library in Tokyo offered a better support for this work, and gave me the possibility of tracing the political thinking and evolution of policy-making regarding the topics of nuclear energy, nuclear latency, and nuclear weapons. Through their complex but efficient digitalized system, it is possible to find all published pieces (newspapers, magazines, pamphlets etc.) in Japan since the 1920s, which helped me reconstruct the political rhetoric (with a particular focus on the Diet debate) and scholarly discussions on nuclear weapons, as well as pamphlets and images that illustrate the nuclear energy culture. The different libraries in Hiroshima also offered good documentation on the *Chūgoku Shimbun* (the historical newspaper of Hiroshima), its relationship with postwar peace culture and the history of anti-nuclear weapons protests. Moreover, the libraries in Hiroshima offer most works (manga art, children's books, documentaries, and movies) related to the atomic bomb, which are very useful sources for looking into Japan's nuclear cultural history. The interviews and discussions (around 60) I conducted with Japanese and American current and former officials, as well as experts, journalists, hibakusha, activists, staff from NGOs, and the general public also constituted a useful addition to my research. Confusing or dry at times, honest and enlightening some other times, those interviews and meetings shed light on a range of issues, including

Japan's nuclear symbolism and different attitudes on the country's nuclear hedging stance. The series of NHK documentaries on historical and security issues also provided good additional commentary on Japan's Meiji, pre-war and postwar eras.

Several historians, political scientists and journalists have tried to explain Japan's apparently inconsistent nuclear policy, interpret its status of nuclear latent country, and some of them have tried to predict the country's future possibilities to proliferate.

There have been more political scientists and policy experts rather than historians who have studied Japan's nuclear policy – we will therefore examine the historians' contribution to the topic first, then review the political scientists, policy experts, journalists, sociologists, and other scholars.

The two main historians whose books examined the history of the Japanese elites' nuclear choices are Akira Kurosaki and Fintan Hoey. Because the most unclear, complex, and intriguing issue of Japanese nuclear history is Prime Minister Satō's implication in the secret deal with the United States to allow nuclear weapons on Japanese territory in the late 1960s, both scholars focus on the same historical period (1960s-1970s).

Akira Kurosaki's *Kakuheiki to Nichibeikankei – Amerika No Kakufukakusan to Nihon No Sentaku 1960–1976 [Nuclear Weapons and U.S.-Japan Relations: U.S. nuclear proliferation and Japan's choice 1960-1976]* (2006) still represents the most comprehensive study of Japan's nuclear history. The book gives a very detailed and skillful account of the role of the alliance in Japan's nuclear weapon policy choices during a specific and important timeframe, and offers an explanation on why Japan did not go nuclear at that time. His story starts in 1960, when Japan and the United States signed the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security on January 19, and ends with the conclusion of

the negotiations on the Okinawa Reversion in the mid-1970s. Kurosaki wonders why there is a disconnect between some pro-nuclear behavior by elites and the sudden announcement of a non-nuclear policy for the country. In fact, Prime Ministers Nobusuke Kishi in the late 1950s and Hayato Ikeda in the early 1960s, for example, had displayed a pro-nuclear weapon attitude. On the other hand, Eisaku Satō took a very unexpected and bold initiative announcing a non-nuclear policy for postwar Japan. What were his motivations and strategy? Furthermore, what impact did the US policy have on that decision?

Following the Chinese nuclear test in the fall of 1964, newly appointed Prime Minister Satō told Ambassador Edwin Reischauer that Japan had the desire of acquiring nuclear weapons. The statement ultimately pressured the United States into protecting Japan using their nuclear umbrella, and that is why Satō announced the Four Non-Nuclear Pillars, emphasizing Japan's future reliance on the American extended nuclear deterrence. Kurosaki stresses that Japan had no other choice than to rely on the nuclear umbrella, also because of the deep mistrust and suspicion of the Soviet Union and China. The author focuses on the decision to make the Three Non-Nuclear Principles the official national policy of Japan, and argues that in the 1970s, the discussion over the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) represented an international event that had the effect of maintaining and consolidating those principles. It is in fact after Japan's ratification of the NPT in 1976 that the principles consolidated into a *kokuze*. In other words, Kurosaki's book argues, those international circumstances had narrowed the Japanese government's policy choices considerably, and at the same time raised the costs of a change in the nuclear policy. That is why Japan had no choice but to hold on tight to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles while staying under the nuclear umbrella, and make this overall stance Japan's "non-nuclear

policy.”

Kurosaki’s scholarship is impressive in that it retraces the motives behind Satō’s decision in that particular moment and takes into consideration the problem of the signature of the NPT. The book does indeed set a very useful and insightful framework to understand the core problem of Japan’s contradictory nuclear policy. If one were to find a needle in the haystack, it would probably be the feeling that the analysis is so narrow and focused on that particular historical moment that sometimes the overall picture is missing, leaving some contextual gaps even in the US-Japan relationship.

The other historian tackling the riddle of Japan’s nuclear policy is Fintan Hoey who, in his *Satō, America and the Cold War: US-Japanese relations, 1964-72* (2015), as well as in his paper “Japan and Extended Nuclear Deterrence: Security and Nonproliferation,” (2016) examines the core contradictions of Japan’s non-nuclear policy through the Satō-Nixon negotiations on the Okinawa reversion and the NPT negotiations. Hoey’s answer is that Japan’s nuclear policy, in fact, is not inconsistent and is actually quite coherent and uncomplicated. According to his research, Japan merely responded to its security needs by hiding under the U.S. extended nuclear deterrence, while at the same time, reacting to the anti-nuclear and pacifist public opinion with the announcing of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. The author’s view of the purpose of securing the US extended nuclear deterrence in the second half of the 1960s is very similar to Kurosaki’s perspective that Satō’s choice was an urgent response to the security needs that emerged after China’s nuclear test in 1964. In Hoey’s account, Satō stands out as a far-sighted and reasonable leader who is far from being a weak puppet of the United States. The author concedes that Satō was certainly concerned by his legacy and his place in history, but he was a very

skilled politician and a great negotiator in that he succeeded in obtaining the nuclear umbrella protection from the United States, whilst also granting some freedom of action regarding Japan's independent nuclear deterrent. Satō was simply acting in the most advantageous way for Japanese interests, according to Hoey, thus making him not only a great leader of modern Japan, but also a major statesman in the 20th century. This work is also a very meticulous historical examination of a narrow but crucial period that constitutes the key of Japan's nuclear history. While the figure of Satō really springs to life and the author makes it very easy to fully understand the Prime Minister's calculations, the anti-nuclear sentiment of the Japanese public is perhaps not explored enough. It is certainly true that Satō's formulation of the non-nuclear policy had a lip-service purpose to appease the pacifist public opinion, but the pacifism and anti-nuclear sentiment of the people is perhaps taken for granted without looking at the nature of it.

Grouping the two historical works on Japan's nuclear security policy makes sense because of their narrow temporal focus, which means that the 2011 Fukushima disaster does not affect the scholarship of these works. However, for a review of the other works on the topics of Japan's nuclear energy and nuclear latency, there is clearly a pre-Fukushima and a post-Fukushima literature.

A short book published by the Henry L. Stimson Center in 2003 titled *Japan's Nuclear Option: Security, Politics and Policy in the 21st Century* collects essays by political scientists such as Sheila A. Smith, Andrew Oros, and Katsuhisa Furukawa, who reflect on the possibility of a future nuclear option for Japan. Every essay tackles the issue from a slightly different perspective, but the overall assessment of the seven authors is that it is very unlikely for Japan to acquire nuclear weapons in the near future because of a number

of different reasons, including domestic constraints or the credibility and necessity of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

U.S. scholar and diplomat Kurt Campbell and journalist and policy expert Tsuyoshi Sunohara, in their chapter called “Japan: Thinking the Unthinkable” in *The Nuclear Tipping Point* (2004), also look at the various times Japanese leaders showed any interest in acquiring nuclear weapons during the Cold War. The authors seem to lean towards an interpretation that sees frequent and fairly strong signs that Japan never fully wanted to abandon its nuclear option, and the increasingly unstable post-Cold War security environment only keeps putting pressure on Japan to revisit its non-nuclear policy. The authors also give policy recommendations to Washington in the last few pages of the chapter, not only advocating for the maintaining of the U.S. extended nuclear deterrence but even prompting the United States to make more frequent and stronger reassurances to Japan.

Environmental journalist Manami Suzuki also studied Japan’s nuclear policy in 2006 in her book *Kaku taikoku-ka suru Nihon – heiwa riyō to kakubusōron* [Japan wants to be a nuclear weapon state – peaceful uses of nuclear power and the development of a nuclear weapons’ program]. Suzuki’s direct and provocative title indeed represents her view that Japan is inevitably marching towards its nuclearization because of its high nuclear latency. Although her knowledge of atomic energy is remarkable, the book seems too narrowly focused on the technical possibility of converting the excess plutonium into nuclear weapons, which limits the political debate on the issue.

Llewelyn Hughes, in his “Why Japan Will Not Go Nuclear (Yet) – international and domestic constraints on the nuclearization of Japan” (2007), defends his stance that it is

unlikely that Japan would cross the nuclear Rubicon, but also warns the audience that the domestic constraints are not completely bullet-proof and the door of nuclearization remains ajar. After examining Japan's past efforts to consider a nuclear option, in his article "Japan's Policy and Views on Nuclear Weapons: a Historical Perspective" (2010), Katsuhisa Furukawa, equally concludes that the likelihood that Japan will go nuclear is very low – on the contrary, it will keep on strengthening the alliance with the United States. This is indeed the most widespread position in the literature as far as Japan's potential nuclear proliferation is concerned.

Innumerable works, especially in Japanese literature, tackle the civilian side of the story. Interestingly, there has been a remarkable boost of publishing or re-editing of these works following the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident in 2011. The "3.11" nuclear accident, indeed, has generated a great amount of literature in Japan, with scholars and journalists examining the flaws in the country's nuclear energy program and activists and politicians who started a trend of literature on rethinking Japan's energy policy, and voiced their concerns and recommendations for the future.

Among them, we can cite *Genpatsu to kenryoku* [Nuclear energy and political power] (2011), by writer Jun'ichirō Yamaoka, who studies the relationship between the nuclear energy industry in Japan and political power. His work examines the eagerness that several political figures, including Yasuhiro Nakasone, Matsutarō Shōriki, and Kakuei Tanaka), have shown in nuclear energy because it would give them great political and decisional power.

Historian Hitoshi Yoshioka, moreover, focuses on the history of nuclear energy in Japan in his post-Fukushima edition of *Genshiryoku no shakaishi: Sono nihonteki tenkai*

[A Social History of Nuclear Power: Its Development in Japan.] (2011). In the first part of the book, Yoshioka narrates the early stages of the history of the Japanese nuclear energy program, while the second part focuses on the recent developments of the program, and a historical assessment of it, with a general reflection on the country's energy policy. In the first edition of the book (1999), Yoshioka emphasizes the major role played by the government, and describes Japan's nuclear energy program as a "subgovernmental model" composed by a dual structure (the Science and Technology Agency and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry) that, combined with the electricity companies, have great influence over national policy. The post-Fukushima edition has removed the phrase, although the idea of the nuclear trinity is very present throughout the book.

A less known work titled *Genshiryoku wo meguru "nichibei kyōryoku" no keisei to teichaku, 1953-1958* [U.S.-Japan collaboration through nuclear energy: its formation and establishment] by I Hyoun was published in 2013. Hyoun's timeframe coincides with the early years of the Japanese nuclear energy program, but instead of telling a domestic story, he mainly focuses on the meaning of the "peaceful uses of atomic energy" in the context of the Cold War and U.S. policy at the time, and examines how the U.S.-Japan nuclear energy agreements played out in that tense atmosphere.

Another interesting work concerning Japan's nuclear energy policy include *Fukushima no Seigi: Nihon no "kawaranasa" to no tataikai* [Fukushima's Justice: struggling against Japan's "unchangeability"] (2013), written by the sociologist Hiroshi Kainuma, originally from Iwaki, a town 30 km South of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. Kainuma's book has raised many eyebrows among the public for he argues in his book that the popular demonstrations and protests against nuclear power in Japan are

useless and will not change anything at all in Japan's nuclear energy policy. His resigned tone and pessimistic views, especially for his young age, have caught many readers' attention, and anti-nuclear groups and movements who have become very vocal after 3/11 have often criticized his downplaying of the Fukushima accident. His work has thus had a polarizing impact on the public opinion on key issues such as trust in the government, democracy in Japan, public opinion, and the role of the media in telling the story of nuclear energy. However, it is a work that shows how relevant Japan's nuclear institutional complex still is, and how hard it is to change Japan's energy program.

A more recent work, *Nuclear Tsunami: The Japanese Government and America's Role in the Fukushima Disaster*, tackling the issue of Japan's nuclear industry and its ties with the government, was published in 2015 by legal historian Richard Krooth, editor Morris Edelson and sociologist Hiroshi Fukurai. This work begins with an account of the psychological campaign by the CIA to change Japanese attitudes towards atomic energy, then moves on to the reconstruction of the Fukushima's nuclear accident in 2011 and explains the "safety myth" that the government had created and promoted.

As far as the question of reprocessing is concerned, physicist and co-director of the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace James Acton, in "Wagging the Plutonium Dog," (2015) has reconstructed how Japan became entrapped in reprocessing, and gives insights and recommendations on the way Japan could handle the urgent problem of excess plutonium.

Sociologist Anthony DiFilippo tackled the issue of national identity in relation to Japan's disarmament policy in his paper "Japanese Nuclear Disarmament Policies, Practices and National Identity." The paper deals with the contrast between the symbolic

remnants of imperial Japan, such as the “kimigayo” (His Imperial Majesty’s Reign) national anthem still in use today and other postwar pacifist values embodied in the Constitution and, as in his other works, DiFilippo analyzes the paradox of Japan’s selective disarmament.

Kyodo News journalist Masakatsu Ota has been following Japan’s nuclear policy for years, publishing over nine books on the subject. His latest paper, “Conceptual Twist of Japanese Nuclear Policy: Its Ambivalence and Coherence Under the US Umbrella” (March 2018) summarizes his findings on Japan’s nuclear paradox. Ota explains the “Nuclear Kabuki Play” that the Japanese government has been performing under the US nuclear umbrella by finding a continuity between the past, the present, and the future of the “US-Japan nuclear alliance.” He argues that the Kabuki Play has two distinct audiences: the US and the anti-nuclear domestic public. This separation, according to the journalist, conveniently enables the Japanese government to simultaneously address the issue of national security on the one hand, and appease the anti-nuclear sentiment of the public on the other hand, which confirms Hoey’s explanation of Japan’s nuclear policy. Ota’s work succeeds in tracing a clear picture of the history of Japan’s relationship with American nuclear weapons, and prompts the reader to reflect on the direction the Japanese nuclear policy will take in the future.

Last but far from least, political scientist Jacques Hymans’ paper “Veto Players, Nuclear Energy, and Nonproliferation: Domestic Institutional Barriers to a Japanese Bomb”, which was published in October 2011, is an essential contribution to the debate on Japan’s nuclear hedging stance. It argues that the political intent that, through the vision of Yasuhiro Nakasone, was present at the very beginning of Japan’s nuclear energy program

quickly faded in favor of industrial and business interests. Citing Yoshioka's and Yamaoka's works, Hymans also demonstrates how the internal bureaucratic power balance dynamics was indeed crucial in keeping Japan's nuclear program away from any military intentions. The phrase "powerful forces of inertia" that Hymans uses to describe Japan's journey in the nuclear world perfectly synthesizes Japan's nuclear hedging stance.³⁹

The one and only explicit mention of "nuclear hedging" by any Japanese current or former official or even expert is by Tōru Hashimoto, former mayor of Osaka. In his April 2017 op-ed, Hashimoto suggests that Japan should consider a strategy of "passive hedging," which is not a "macho" position where Japan threatens to go nuclear because it can, but it is a "cowardly approach" where it threatens to do so for lack of other options. Hashimoto describes it a "milder stance than going full nuclear."⁴⁰ The passive stance that Hashimoto suggests somewhat resonates with Hymans' conclusion, because it removes the transcendent political ambition that accompanies Japan's nuclear latency.

Although the present work shares Hymans' view that Japan's nuclear hedging posture does not stem from a continuous political strategy or ambition, it tries to fill the gap in the literature by exploring the continuity of the elements that do compose Japan's nuclear hedging stance. By examining how Japan's "Nuclear Bargain" of the 1950s was kept up until the present time, this work attempts to demonstrate that Japan's nuclear hedging posture was consolidated by the continuity of four main elements within or engendered by the Four Pillars of Nuclear Policy. Each chapter will examine an element, with the first two constituting the items in the Nuclear Bargain.

³⁹ Jacques E.C. Hymans, "Veto Player, Nuclear Energy, and Nonproliferation: Domestic Institutional Barriers to a Japanese Bomb," *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Fall 2011), pp. 154–189

⁴⁰ Tōru Hashimoto, "Tai-Kitachōsen no Kirifuda wa Kaku-Hedging," *The President Online*, April 26, 2017

Chapter I will tackle the first element, i.e. the first part of such bargain: the post-Hiroshima grassroots rejection of nuclear weapons and the construction of Japan's pacifist identity. It will show how this pacifist identity played a role in leading up to the national non-nuclear policy, and how the Japanese government has tried to juggle the issues of pacifism and security, disarmament and deterrence.

Chapter II will focus on the second element, or the other part of the bargain, i.e. the introduction of nuclear energy in Japanese politics. It will analyze the timing of such introduction, and how the status of *hibakukoku* is linked to the introduction of nuclear energy in Japan. It will also show the emergence of a nuclear energy culture while engendering a status of unmanageable nuclear latency despite a history of nuclear energy accidents and miscalculations.

Chapter III will study the third element that has consolidated Japan's nuclear hedging stance. It explains how Japan perpetuated the enthusiasm for nuclear energy into the present time by creating a complex system that encompasses beliefs, symbols, and myths associated with nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It will illustrate this nuclear energy culture (*genpatsu bunka*) by introducing the Atomic Village and analyzing the cultural tools that have led Japan and the Japanese to be so devoted to nuclear energy. It will also introduce the idea that the Fukushima nuclear accident might be changing these dynamics and the public perception of nuclear energy.

Finally, Chapter IV will examine the last element composing Japan's nuclear hedging stance: the evolution of Japanese political rhetoric, showing that although there is a renaissance in the nuclear debate, the rhetoric that has fed regional nuclear suspicions has always been present since the time of the bargain. It will demonstrate that through political

rhetoric, Japan's nuclear policy has started moving towards reconciling all the items analyzed in this work: the pacifist identity, the anti-nuclear sentiment, the *hibakusha* status, the pursuit of nuclear energy, disarmament ideals, and security concerns.

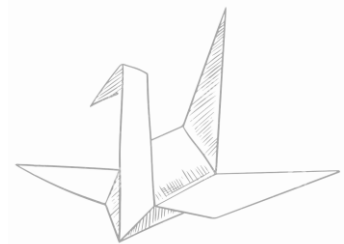
CHAPTER I

Japan's Nuclear Bargain Part I: Rejecting Nuclear Weapons and Embracing Pacifism

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Introduction:

The first element that composes Japan's nuclear hedging stance is the country's postwar pacifism and rejection of nuclear weapons. Unsurprisingly, Hiroshima and Nagasaki have become symbols of peace and of the atrocities of war. They have also become a salient part of the work carried out by Japanese anti-nuclear weapons activists, who make important efforts to sensitize the public to the danger of war by spreading the personal stories of A-bomb survivors.⁴¹ Postwar Japan is indeed described by some as having acquired a strong antimilitarist and pacifist identity, perceived both by the domestic public and the international community.⁴² This identity, constructed through rejection of war, of nuclear weapons, and the symbolism of the 1946 Constitution, has made its way into national policy, and is reflected in many political aspects, including the severe restrictions on the defense budget up until the 1980s, the limited role and image of the Self-Defense Forces, and the adoption of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. It would thus be counterintuitive to think that Japan could quickly overcome such a deep-rooted identity and acquire nuclear weapons. This chapter will recount one side of the Nuclear Bargain and explain why the pacifist identity and the status of *hibakukoku* plays an important part in shaping the nuclear hedging stance. Firstly, it will examine Japan's pre-war history of pacifism, offering a historical context for the emergence of the postwar anti-war pacifism and nuclear allergy, which will be the focus of the second section of the chapter. The second section will indeed describe the characteristics of Japan's postwar grassroots pacifism. Lastly, the chapter will look at how the Japanese government has dealt with balancing the ideas of pacifism and disarmament with the one of security and deterrence, which are seen as two different conceptual categories.



⁴¹ See for example, the work of Peace Boat or ANT (Asian Network of Trust), whose mission is to build peace in the world by promoting Hiroshima's message of peace and reconciliation: <http://ant-hiroshima.org/en/index.html>; author's interview with Tomoko Watanabe, April 14, 2016

⁴² This will be explored later in this work (Chapter I and Chapter IV), but see for example Andrew Oros, *Normalizing Japan: Politics, Identity, and the Evolution of Security Practice*, Studies in Asian Security, Stanford University Press, 2008

1.1 *Japan's pre-war history of war and peace*

It is important to distinguish the definition of the term “pacifism” as it is understood in Western literature, from what we intend to study in this work, i.e. “popular pacifism,” or grassroots pacifism specific to Japan. In Western tradition, pacifism includes a broad spectrum of positions, from the pragmatic belief that international disputes should be settled by peaceful means, to the unconditional deontological view that rejects any use of violence and physical force under any circumstances. Historians Peter Brock and Thomas P. Socknat argue that pacifism, “in the sense generally accepted in English-speaking areas,” is an “unconditional rejection of all forms of warfare.”⁴³

Building on the theory put forward by historian A.J.P. Taylor, international relations expert Martin Ceadel further adds an interesting distinction to the debate: ‘pacifism’ and ‘pacificism.’ The shorter and more commonly used term “pacifism” refers to the drastic and unconditional refusal of war that is in line with the definition by Brock and Socknat. The latter, ‘pacificism,’ on the other hand, describes a more limited view of such rejection of war, and entails the acceptance of a controlled use of armed force deemed necessary to prevent war in the future.⁴⁴ Ceadel bases this distinction on the British experience, and identifies two different movements within the pacifist thought: the one inspired by Christianity, and the other one focused on Enlightenment rationalism. The two strands then

⁴³ Peter Brock and Thomas P. Socknat, *Challenge to Mars: Pacifism from 1918 to 1945*, University of Toronto Press, 1999, ix

⁴⁴ Martin Ceadel, *The Origins of War Prevention: The British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1730-1854*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 41

merged to become the base of Western liberalism, both in Great Britain and in the United States. Pacifism then began to also be an important component within other ideologies that had not been influenced by religion, such as anarchism or socialism.

Because Japan had been almost completely secluded and isolated from the rest of the world for more than 250 years (1603-1868), the Japanese only started becoming more aware of issues regarding war and peace after Japan's first official contact with the outside world, i.e. the moment when the American fleet arrived to Japan in 1853, forcing the country to open up and embrace change and modernization for the first time. After a challenging transitional period that plunged the country into political, social and economic confusion for several years, the Meiji Restoration era (1868-1912) that followed this opening to the world marked the beginning of modernization and industrialization of Japan, which often looked at Western nations for inspiration and direction, thus introducing for the first time military conscription in 1873. This move was met by a major resistance by the Japanese people, who saw it as an additional economic burden on the society. However, global pacifist ideals seem to never have been the reason of this popular opposition to participation in potential wars, which was rather motivated by practical and individual reasons. It is in fact not until 1945 that the Japanese started actively promoting a peace culture. The exceptionally long period of isolationism endured by Japan is in fact a key element to understand why the Japanese pacifist identity did not form until after the end of World War II. Tadatoshi Fujii's research on soldiers' letters and diaries during the first Sino-Japanese war (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905), for example, shows how the soldiers' fears about being sent to die never really transcend the individual level, not once resulting in a reflection on the moral implications of fighting and killing another

human being. Fujii points out in fact that the letters show that the soldiers never really paused to reflect on the moral consequences of engaging in war.⁴⁵

The following Taishō era (1912-1926), also dubbed “Taishō Democracy,” represents a very peculiar phase of Japanese history because the country had just started reaching a certain comfort in the modern and industrialized world. During this very brief era sandwiched between the tumultuous Meiji years and the long Shōwa era, several groups and movements started to appear advocating for the establishment of universal male suffrage, the right to free speech and association. Although groups advocating for disarmament also appeared during this era, political scientist Takeshi Ishida observes that the movement missed the pacifist perspective for none of these groups ever questioned the armed state of the country.⁴⁶

The Taishō period also witnessed several strikes in favor of the establishment of elections and of labor rights. However, these movements and attempts at democracy were soon harshly repressed by the government via the military at the beginning of the Shōwa era, which, with the Second Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945), opened the floor to a long period of oppression, propaganda, and censorship. The lack of a pacifist ideal in these movements, combined with a new-found confidence and the growing promotion of an expansionist ideology made the absorbing of the government propaganda easier for the Japanese public. After testing the grounds with the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895),⁴⁷ the victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) during the last part of the Meiji period certainly had an important impact on the Japanese self-perception in the world. In his famous historical

⁴⁵ Tadatoshii Fujii, *Heitachi no Sensō* (The Soldiers' War), Asahi Shimbunsha, 2000, pp. 8-9

⁴⁶ Takeshi Ishida, *Seiji to Kotoba* (Politics and Language), Tokyo University Press, 1989, Vol. I, pp. 42-65

⁴⁷ Rotem Kowner, *Historical Dictionary of the Russo-Japanese War*, Scarecrow Press, 2006, p. 363

novel *Clouds above the Hill* (*Saka no Ue no Kumo*), Ryōtarō Shiba claims that Japan was forced by Russia to start the war and, like a mouse cornered by a cat, its only survival option was to fight back and bite the cat using the last drop of strength that was left.⁴⁸ Shiba's work has been a permanent best-seller since its first publication as a book in 1969 and has sold over 20 million copies. This interpretation, however, has recently been refuted by historians such as Yukio Itō, who asserts that Japan ignored three opportunities to refuse entering war with Russia,⁴⁹ thus attributing Japan a more proactive military stance. The saying *hakkō ichiu* (literally "eight ropes, one roof"), attributed to the first Emperor of Japan and cherished by the military until the end of the war, expresses the desire to extend the domination of Japan in all directions.

The Russo-Japanese War, in fact, is a significant turning point in Japanese history⁵⁰ that gave the Japanese an important and long-lasting boost of confidence in their military capabilities. Not only the Japanese had won a war despite having a limited and short naval tradition, but their venture had also impressed other Asian nations and set a precedent for a small and racially despised country defeating a large, powerful, and globally established empire such as Russia. When the Japanese attacked Port Arthur in February 1904, Britain's *The Times* declared that "[t]he Japanese Navy has opened the war by an act of daring which is destined to take a place of honour in naval annals."⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ryōtarō Shiba, *Saka no Ue no Kumo (Clouds Above the Hill)*, Bungeishunjū, Vol. 3, 1973, p. 178

⁴⁹ Yukio Itō, "Nichiro Sensō to Nihon Gaikō" (The Russo-Japanese War and Japan's Diplomacy), Ministry of Defense, 2004; see also Hiroyuki Takai, "Kenshō: *Saka no Ue no Kumo*" (An Analysis of *Clouds Above the Hill*), presented at the National Symposium "*Saka no Ue no Kumo* wo tou" (Investigating *Clouds Above the Hill*), November 13, 2010 at Ehime University

⁵⁰ The view that the Russo-Japanese War represents a clear break in Japanese history is shared by most historians except by Rotem Kowner who, in his *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War* (London and New York Routledge 2007), sees the war as an element of continuity from the Meiji Restoration.

⁵¹ Marie Conte-Helm, *Japan and the North East of England: From 1862 to the Present Day*, Bloomsbury 3PL, p. 40

As Hiroaki Satō comments, the Russo-Japanese war marks the heroic culmination of Japan's westernization,⁵² and represents a hopeful note for Japan's future into the new century. Moreover, as Anshan Li observes, Japan's victory against Russia also sent "shockwaves through every level of Chinese society"⁵³ and the idea that an Asian underdog could possibly defeat a European great power brought about an important sense of hope. Chinese intellectuals even urged the Chinese to adopt the Japanese model in politics, education and the military.⁵⁴

In Japan, the domestic elation and incredulity of the victory in 1905 quickly spread from the Imperial Navy to the general public and, as Naoko Shimazu states, the Russo-Japanese war became "the defining event in consolidating the identity of the ordinary Japanese citizens as *kokumin*,"⁵⁵ i.e. the "nation." This widespread enthusiasm for a brand-new identity and new-found power was carried out through the Second World War. The day after General Maresuke Nogi's victory in Port Arthur on January 2, 1905, *The Times* again commented that "[t]he Russians demonstrated exceptional bravery. However, the Japanese who challenged it are ever greater. Their perseverance, their quick wit and wonderful courage, their intelligent response to a difficult situation – the entire world is very excited right now. The Japanese have succeeded in showing the world that Japan has risen to a proud great power worthy of other Western nations."⁵⁶

Although the government's constant propaganda influenced and swayed the public's perception, the hope and ambition of the Japanese *kokumin* to become a world-

⁵² Hiroaki Satō, "Multiple perspectives in novel on the Russo-Japanese War," *The Japan Times*, July 27, 2013

⁵³ Anshan Li, in *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, Vol. 2, Brill 2007, p. 503

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Naoko Shimazu in *Nationalisms in Japan*, Sheffield Centre for Japanese Studies/Routledge Series, 2006, p. 41

⁵⁶ Keizō Maekawa, "Ajia Shugi to Nihon," the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management, September 2005

class power (*ittōkoku*) also played an important role in silencing the few voices that were advocating for peace. Kenneth J. Ruoff notes in fact that the execution of a global war would have been impossible without a supporting public, and underlines the role of an enthusiastic Japanese people as much as the strong propaganda by the government.⁵⁷ An interesting point that Ruoff also makes is that Japanese pre-war imperialism is different from Italy's fascism or Germany's Nazism because Japan strongly emphasized continuity, specifically imperial continuity, and highlighted the *bansei ikkei*, i.e. "unbroken imperial line." Kiyoshi Inobushi, naval reporter and author of *The Imperial Navy* (Tokyo, 1939), opens his volume mentioning this characteristic: "[t]he Empire of Greater Japan is governed by a line of Emperors unbroken through ages eternal, in conformity with the divine decree of the Founder of the Empire. This, the first precept of our national structure, is a basic principle as eternal and unchanging as the universe."⁵⁸ According to this interpretation, the Emperor's supreme command is sacred and inviolable, and the inseparable link between the Emperor and the armed forces "had already been determined before the foundation of the state."

While fascist Italy and Nazi Germany often stressed the importance of caesura, rebirth and re-appropriation of some of the symbolical ancient values, imperial Japan's *bansei ikkei* narrative revolved around the continued uniqueness of Japanese polity (*kokutai*). The concept was complemented with the central notion of "unparalleled national polity" (*banpō muhi no kokutai*), a phrase considered taboo in the post-World War II era.

⁵⁷ Kenneth J. Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2600th Anniversary*, Cornell University Press, 2010

⁵⁸ "The Emperor and the Imperial Navy" by Kiyoshi Inobushi, in "Special Asst. to Sec. of State for Atomic Energy & Outer Space – General Records Relating to Disarmament, 1942-1962," NND 949673, Box 9 National Archives at College Park, RG 59,

The concept of “unparalleled” was often used to stress the importance of Japan’s uniqueness vis-à-vis other nations and cultures. Even towards the end of the war, Prime Minister Hideki Tōjō’s statement at the Imperial Assembly that “the race of Yamato,⁵⁹ receiving the prosperity of the Imperial Household for more than 3000 years, is blessed with unparalleled mental strength and patriotism. That is why, in order to protect and defend our existence in this East Asian war, no one can ever stop our fierce, and divinely protected strength that will unfailingly lead us forward” was followed by a unanimous applause by all members of the Assembly.⁶⁰ The term *kokutai* vaguely embraces a series of myths and values that are never fully described or defined but conveys an idea of whole, structural, inherent, and unique.

As Shin’ichi Kitaoka observes, the alliance with Great Britain in 1902 and the victory in the Russo-Japanese war fulfilled the goal of *datsu-a nyū-ō* (“leaving Asia and joining Europe”) that Japan desired to achieve since the Meiji Restoration.⁶¹ This slogan was complemented by two more mottos that were born in the same period: *fukoku kyōhei* (“rich nation, strong military”), and *bunmei kaika* (“civilization and enlightenment”). The theory of abandoning Asia (*datsu-a ron*) first appeared in the famous editorial in 1885 anonymously, and was later attributed to influential author, educator and entrepreneur Yukichi Fukuzawa (1835-1901). Considered one of the founders of modern Japan, Fukuzawa still represents the symbol of the Japanese transition from a closed feudal samurai society to an industrialized country and major player in the international scene.

However, the newly acquired optimism and confidence that the Russo-Japanese war

⁵⁹ “Yamato” is the ancient name of Japan.

⁶⁰ Masayasu Hosaka, *Tōjō Hideki to Tennō no jidai* (Tōjō Hideki and the Emperor’s era), 1970, Vol. 2

⁶¹ Shin’ichi Kitaoka, “Japan’s Identity and What It Means,” paper presented for the The Japan Forum on International Relations, December 3, 1998

brought about were also followed by a realization that a military victory alone was still not enough. Field Marshal Aritomo Yamagata, for example, predicted in his series of memoranda that following the Russo-Japanese war, the gap between the *hakujin* (“Caucasians”) and the *yūshokujinshu* (the “colored people”) will only intensify, and warned the Japanese to be cautious in celebrating too soon. In order to be ready to face the “white coalition,” Yamagata suggested greater cooperation between China and Japan.⁶² Although Japan’s status as a great power was beginning to be recognized by the end of World War I, Japanese military leaders were well aware that their country was still at the very bottom of the great power hierarchy dominated by racial inequality. As a result of this self-consciousness and in the wake of the *datsu-a ron*, Pan-Asianism re-emerged and gradually became a foreign policy goal. Indeed, Pan-Asianism grew into an important component of Japan’s quest of identity in the pre-war era, and will provide us with some insights on the postwar pacifism and nuclear policy as well. An interesting trait of the Japanese Pan-Asianist ideal is that it is constantly caught between regionalism and nationalism, between equality and superiority. As Stefan Tanaka states, Asia was “the spatial and temporal object through which Japanese defined themselves.”⁶³ Japan’s self-positioning in relation to Asia as opposed to the Western world played in fact a major role in constructing modern Japan’s identity: should Japan try to carry out the Westernization process and be part of the West, or should it join the Asian camp against the Western encroachment? The answer to this question was crucial to form the country’s pre-war

⁶² Aritomo Yamagata, *Yamagata Aritomo Ikensho* (Memoranda by Aritomo Yamagata), 1872-1919, Tokyo, Hara Shobō, 1966

⁶³ Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient. Rendering Pasts into History*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993, p. 77

national identity.⁶⁴ Indeed, as Gavan McCormack puts it, Japan constantly “vacillated between insisting on being not Asian at all, and declaring itself the epitome of Asianness.”⁶⁵ Even Yukichi Fukuzawa, before publicly supporting a policy of “leaving Asia,” had advocated for Japan to be the leader (*meishu*) of a united Asia.⁶⁶ As its military confidence started to grow in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese war, Japan began rejecting its presence in Asia merely as a member, and the idea that it should be the leader of all Asian nations began to prevail instead. This tendency eventually led to Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe to proclaim the “New Order in East Asia” (*Tō-A shin chitsujo*) on December 22, 1938, in order to promote the Greater East Asian sphere of co-prosperity and peace with Japan at the top of the system. As Kimitada Miwa observes, the move was designed as a replica of the Chinese Empire, reestablishing a hierarchical order led by Japan and the “imperial benevolence” replacing the benevolent emperor of the Middle Kingdom.⁶⁷

Some authors have found voices condemning the war before the Russo-Japanese war. Stewart Lone, for example, mentions rather strong anti-war voices during the Meiji Restoration.⁶⁸ Naoko Shimazu also refers to an antiwar movement that arose in the early years of the 20th century, mostly revolving around the socialist weekly newspaper *Heimin Shimbun* (“The Commoner’s Newspaper”), whose core belief was opposition to war, thus

⁶⁴ T.J. Pempel, “Transpacific Torii: Japan and the Emerging Asian Regionalism,” in Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi, eds, *Network Power, Japan and Asia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997, pp. 47-82

⁶⁵ Gavan McCormack and Norma Field, *The Emptiness of Japanese Affluence*, Routledge, 1996, p. 121

⁶⁶ Sven Saaler, “Pan-Asianism in modern Japanese history: Overcoming the nation, creating a region, forging an empire,” in *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism and Borders*, edited by Sven Saaler and J. Victor Koschmann, Routledge, London and New York, 2007, p. 4

⁶⁷ Kimitada Miwa, “Pan-Asianism in modern Japan – Nationalism, regionalism and universalism,” in *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism and Borders*, edited by Sven Saaler and J. Victor Koschmann, Routledge, London and New York, 2007, p. 24

⁶⁸ Stewart Lone, *Army, Empire and Politics in Meiji Japan – The Three Careers of General Katsura Tarō*, Palgrave MacMillan UK, 2000

gathering the pacifist voices of socialist journalists, as well as Buddhist and Christian figures.⁶⁹ However, we can argue that the *Heimin Shimbun*, founded by subversive anarchist Shūsui Kōtoku, only survived for two years (1903-1905), and these dissenting voices were promptly repressed by the Meiji Government. These anti-war socialist opinions, in fact, died down as the *Heimin Shimbun* disappeared, were overthrown and easily silenced by the national euphoria that the Russo-Japanese war brought about.⁷⁰ Although reemerging briefly after the conclusion of the Treaty of Portsmouth in September 1905, which formally ended the Russo-Japanese war, those pacifist voices were mostly found in rural areas of the country where conscription was seen as a personal tragedy, thus never rising as a nation-wide movement.⁷¹ Other Christian or communism-inspired organizations, such as the Japanese People's Anti-war Alliance (*Nihonjin Hansen Dōmei*) or the League to Raise the Political Consciousness of Japanese Troops (*Nihon Heishi Kakusei Dōmei*) emerged in the late 1930s, but were based in China as resistance movements and struggled to gain ground in Japan.

The optimism and high morale that followed the Russo-Japanese war were also echoed in the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor attack of December 1941. In fact, the establishing of the Pan-Asianist ideal as a policy goal also explains the public's growing pro-war sentiment at the eve of the Pacific War. As Atsushi Iwata comments, although some argue that the Japanese people were deceived by military leaders and dragged into the war unknowingly, Japan could actually not have entered the war without a wide public

⁶⁹ Naoko Shimazu, *ibid*; see also Shō Konishi, "The Absence of Portsmouth in an Early Twentieth Century Japanese Imagination of Peace" in Steven Ericson and Allen Hockley, eds., *The Treaty of Portsmouth and its Legacies*. Hanover, New Hampshire: Dartmouth College Press 2008, pp. 97-105

⁷⁰ Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen At War* (2nd Edition), Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, June 2006, p. 44

⁷¹ Mari Yamamoto, *Grassroots Pacifism in Post-War Japan: The Rebirth of a Nation* (Sheffield Centre for Japanese Studies/Routledge Series), Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition, p. 4

support.⁷² Journalist Sōichirō Tahara claims that Prime Minister Hideki Tōjō received more than 3000 letters from citizens from all over the country prompting him to “destroy the United States and Britain.”⁷³

When Japan adopted the so-called pacifist Constitution in 1946, the nation’s popular pacifism born after the war did not have the characteristics of the brief Meiji-era pacifism inspired by socialism and communism. Because Japan’s postwar pacifism was not born from the Western tradition, it does not necessarily find its roots in religion either. Although having been exposed to Christianity since the sixteenth century through Catholic missionaries, Japan never became a strong base for Christianity, and Christians always remained a minority. The Christianity-inspired pacifism, moreover, was not the only one that was related to religion: Buddhist groups, such as the well-known Sōka Gakkai, also considered pacifism as the cornerstone of their beliefs. As Mari Yamamoto observes, however, those religious groups were a very small part of the overall Japanese postwar pacifist activism.⁷⁴

Although, as mentioned earlier, the Meiji-Taishō era pacifism was mainly limited to intellectuals who drew their thought from socialism, the pacifism that was born in the aftermath of the war was hardly affected by such school of thought. In fact, the Japanese in the postwar era mainly drew their pacifism from their own individual experiences of the war. The emotional component is key to understand Japan’s postwar shift in identity, and the relationship between the leaders and the public opinion. A rather cryptic six-page report

⁷² Atsushi Iwata, “Kaisen no Hi ni Kangaeru: Naze Nihon Kokumin wa ano Sensō wo Shiji shitanoka?” (Reflecting on the Day the War Began: Why did the Japanese Citizens Support that War?), BLOGOS Iken wo tsunagu. Nihon ga Kawaru, December 8, 2015: <http://blogos.com/article/148733/>

⁷³ Sōichirō Tahara, *Nihon no Sensō* [Japan’s Wars], Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2000, pp. 215 and 485–6; also Mari Yamamoto, *ibid.*, p. 4

⁷⁴ Mari Yamamoto, *ibid.*, p. 10

filed by foreign intelligence officer Kazutaka Watanabe in October 1965 describes the importance of the concept of *kimochi* (*ki* “spirit, energy, empathy” and *mochi* “stance, position”) as a “strange mental entity” that dominates the Japanese society, from interpersonal exchanges up to the political level. Watanabe describes *kimochi* as a “delicate, touchy, unexplainable psychological phenomenon” that is crucial in order to analyze the Japanese: “[w]ithout an understanding and appreciation of kimochi, a Westerner will be unable to accomplish anything successfully when dealing with the Japanese, either as individuals or as a people.”⁷⁵ He further explains that *kimochi* is “intuitive, instinctive, and perhaps even foolish in many cases, but it is very real to the Japanese. (...) Since kimochi is inner development, it cannot be created by logical persuasion from outside, nor by realistic explanation. It cannot be reasoned with; cannot be bribed; cannot be duplicated. It is mysterious in the sense that no one, even the person himself, can put a finger on it. And yet, it is a solemn reality at the bottom of one’s mind and heart, which silently and subconsciously guides his actions.”⁷⁶

Watanabe also compares the subtle use of the slogan “Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere” that was launched by the military clique prior to the war, to the “psychological infiltration” that the “leftist governments” used in the postwar era by providing same types of slogans such as “No More Hiroshima” or “No More War.”⁷⁷ The author further adds:

The anti-military movements after the war were sheer foolishness because the threat of Communism hangs over us constantly. The world will be in serious trouble if we do not have strong armed forces to stop the flood of Communism. The Japanese know this, but their Kimochi is the fear of death. To them, life is dearer than principles. It sounds cowardly, but after their bitter experience of having two cities blasted by Atom Bombs, with hundreds of thousands of innocent people killed in a second, they instinctively feel that not ever again shall even one small baby die because of a principle.

⁷⁵ Kazutaka Watanabe, “KIMOCHI – No. 238,” October 1965, John K. Emmerson files, Box 11, Hoover Archives, Stanford, California

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

All the world knows that *any* war is bad. But our Kimochi shuts our eyes to the burning reality and makes us think, “War is bad.” We are almost allergic to war. This feeling is unexplainable and instinctive. Ambassador Reischauer used the word, “Kokumin Kanjo,” which means National Feeling. Kokumin Kanjo is the formal way to say Kimochi. Our Kimochi was for war before, but now is against war.⁷⁸

Watanabe, indeed, does not seem to see any discontinuity in the Japanese way of dealing with the drastic change that the end of World War II brought about. He explains this shift of position as a mere change in the direction *kimochi* was controlled, thus implying the existence of a certain continuity in the way the national feeling was manipulated by the elites. Watanabe’s interpretation of the shift is indeed similar to an instinctive reaction to the events – rejection of the war was indeed the first emotion that engendered postwar pacifism in the case of Japan. This constitutes another important difference from the Meiji-Taishō era pacifism based on a socialist thought.

That is why the popular peace culture that started appearing and spreading across the country in the aftermath of the World War II was first born as a strong gut reaction to the horrors of war. As Hiroshi Momose acknowledges, however, the devastating defeat in 1945 was not always an abrupt awakening that prompted the Japanese public opinion to go from being pro-war to completely pro-peace. In fact, Momose mentions a “peculiar dualism” in the psychology of the Japanese people: on the one hand, the Japanese appeared to be devoted to fighting the “Holy War” for the Emperor; but on the other hand, they were “tired and weary of the protracted and hopeless war.”⁷⁹ The shortage of food, clothing, the paralyzed transportation system and the constant fears of air raids were a heavy burden the people complained about daily, only to end their complaining with the phrase “We have to

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Hiroshi Momose, “Democracy and Pacifism in Post-War Japan,” in *Hiroshima to Heiwa – Hiroshima and Peace*, Keisuisha, Hiroshima, 2010, pp. 113-130

win the War anyway,” which, as the historian comments, sounded like a daily greeting.⁸⁰

This duality explains the absence of resistance of the Japanese vis-à-vis the Allied Forces’ occupation, and the people’s ready acceptance of the new aspects of a democracy in the aftermath of the war. Watanabe reports in the document on Kimochi: “[t]hough Japan is in the 20th century in industrial techniques; in the 19th century in economy and finance; in the 18th century in politics, we are in a pre-historic age in social mentality and behavior. We felt no antagonism when General MacArthur said, ‘Japan is a boy of twelve.’ We knew it to be true.”⁸¹ The idea that Japan is a child under many aspects has not died down, as several Japanese politicians and analysts have used similar analogies to describe their country even in more recent times.⁸²

As Momose observes, the GHQ “delivered almost everything democratic to the Japanese people, but there was one thing it refused to deliver – that was the freedom of discussing the atomic bomb suffering.”⁸³

The slight delay in opening the atomic bomb debate in Japan discussed in the next section of this chapter also shaped the way peace culture spread in the aftermath of the defeat, and the timing anti-nuclear movements first started to appear. This delayed timing, in turn, defined a unique relationship between the government and the public, highlighting an initial gap between the *tatemae* (official stance) of the elites, and their *honne* (actual behavior) vis-à-vis pacifist anti-nuclear movements and atomic bomb victims. Watanabe’s report can be useful once again when discussing the concept of *tatemae* and *honne* that was first mentioned in the previous chapter:

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Kazutaka Watanabe, *ibid.*

⁸² This idea will be more developed in the following chapter in relation to postwar nationalist thought.

⁸³ Hiroshi Momose, *ibid.*

Kimochi was further developed during the Tokugawa period,⁸⁴ when individuals, tightly chained by the rigid system of feudalism, were deprived of all personal expression. Even the most highly cultivated people had to keep silent. The nation as a whole, in the fetters of the caste-system, was silent. (...)

Under such spiritual suppression, Kimochi spread all over the country and became a universal phenomenon in the social consciousness of the Japanese. Everyone developed a little world of their own, far away from the official “consensus of opinion.” It was during this period that Haiku, Sumi-e, and many other expressive arts developed to magnificent heights. They were expressions of the non-expression; the personal “I” developing alongside the social “I.” Thus, Japan’s vertical system developed dualism in man; the inner feeling and the outward expression. The two are independent of each other. The outer self does things, while the inner self may be philosophic, or even cynical. (...) In a country where freedom of expression was denied, Kimochi developed as a personal outlet.

Without ever mentioning the terms *tatema* or *honne*, the document explores the idea of outer self and inner self in Japanese society, and describes the Japanese dichotomy born during a long feudal era of historical repression. This analysis of the Japanese duality encourages us to explore more closely the relationship between the organized grassroots anti-nuclear sentiment that started to develop in the mid-1950s and the timing and manner in which the government developed the nation’s official anti-nuclear stance.

⁸⁴ 1603-1868

1.2 *Postwar Japanese Pacifism and the “nuclear allergy”*

“These are the bells that did not ring for weeks or months after the disaster. May there never be a time when they do not ring! May they ring out this message of peace until the morning of the day on which the world ends.”

Takashi Nagai, *The Bells of Nagasaki*, 1949

During a conference at the Reitaku University in Chiba prefecture on June 30, 2007, Nagasaki-born Fumio Kyūma, Minister of Defense under Shinzō Abe’s first government, stated that “it is true that because of the atomic bomb, countless people in Nagasaki have suffered. However, my mind is now at peace thinking that the dropping of the bombs helped end the war – it was just unavoidable” (author’s translation).⁸⁵

The statement was picked up that same day by the *Asahi Shimbun*, which claimed that the Minister seemed to openly approve the dropping of the bombs. The rather casual Japanese phrase “*shōganai*” used by the Minister to express the unavoidability of the atomic bomb has a very broad and vague meaning in the Japanese language, but the fact that it was interpreted by the media and the public as justifying the atomic bombings shows the public’s outrage vis-à-vis Kyūma’s light-heartedness over such a serious matter as nuclear weapons.⁸⁶ The following day, Kyūma went on Fuji TV to clarify his statement and

⁸⁵ *Asahi Shimbun*, June 30, 2007 (a copy of the article can be found at: <http://web.archive.org/web/20070702165614/http://www.asahi.com/politics/update/0630/TKY200706300263.html>)

⁸⁶ The Head of the Ritsumeikan University called the choice of the phrase “*shōganai*” as “heartless” and “incredibly dismissive”: <http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/mng/er/wp-museum/news/07/070704/index.html>

respond to the massive critiques he had been receiving since the day before. After some resistance, the Minister apologized if he had unintentionally hurt the *hibakushas*' feelings, and even received a strict warning by the Prime Minister himself. However, when he announced that he had no intention of resigning, the Hibakusha Association, the Anti-Nuclear Pro-Peace Movement, and other groups strongly protested. On July 2, the Nagasaki Prefectural Assembly also passed a unanimous resolution condemning Kyūma's words,⁸⁷ and the governor of the prefecture said that he "will never want to hear anything like that, ever again."⁸⁸ After one more statement resisting to resign in the morning of July 3, the Minister was eventually forced to step down in the afternoon of that same day. Even during the press conference following his resignation, Kyūma tried to attribute his gaffe to the fact that the phrase "*shōganai*" (literally "it could not be helped") is commonly used in the dialect of Kyushu Island for all sorts of situations. However, the national press did not let this go, and asked linguists researching on the Kyushu dialect, a professor of the University of Shimane, and even members of the Nagasaki Peace Association, who all denied that the phrase was part of the common dialect.⁸⁹

The very harsh critiques and bashing of the former Minister persisted for weeks after his resignation: the Nagasaki anti-nuclear weapons group Gensuikyō organized a demonstration on July 5, asking Prime Minister Shinzō Abe to apologize and requesting that the Three Non-Nuclear Principles be finally made into law.⁹⁰ Five groups of Nagasaki *hibakusha* also wrote an open letter to Kyūma, pointing out that dismissing the incident as a misunderstanding was deeply problematic. They also strongly insisted that he clarified

⁸⁷ *Nagasaki Shimbun*, July 4, 2007: <http://www.nagasaki-np.co.jp/peace/2007/kiji/07/0403.html>

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ See for example *J-cast News*: <https://www.j-cast.com/2007/07/04008973.html>

⁹⁰ *Nagasaki Shimbun*, July 6, 2007: <http://www.nagasaki-np.co.jp/peace/2007/kiji/07/0603.html>

his positions on national defense policy and his views on history,⁹¹ to the point that the former Minister decided not to attend the annual Peace Ceremony in Nagasaki, his hometown, on August 9. The 2009 June issue of the *Bungeishunjū* magazine also revealed that the pressure lead to the politician's mother-in-law committing suicide on the anniversary of Nagasaki as an extreme gesture of protest against the heavy attacks that her son-in-law had been subjected to.⁹²

This spiraling dramatic series of events starkly contrast with what happened on the other side of the Pacific Ocean on the same day that Fumio Kyūma resigned. On July 3, 2007 during a press conference in Washington, D.C., US special envoy for nuclear proliferation Robert G. Joseph made an even more explicit remark on the savior-like role of the atomic bomb: "I think that most historians would agree that the use of the atomic bomb brought to a close a war that would have cost millions more lives, not just hundreds of thousands of allied lives but literally millions of Japanese lives."⁹³ While Robert Joseph's statement did not have any real impact on the American public and the press, the Japanese public was extremely upset at those words with some politicians condemning them,⁹⁴ and ten years later, they are still remembered in the Japanese press as "patronizing" (*"onkiseгамashii"*).⁹⁵

⁹¹ *Nagasaki Shimbun*, July 11, 2007: <http://www.nagasaki-np.co.jp/peace/2007/kiji/07/1101.html>

⁹² *Bungeishunjū*, June 2009

⁹³ "Briefing with US Special Envoy for Nuclear Proliferation Robert G. Joseph and Russian Federation Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak on Cooperation in Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Proliferation US Department of State, June 30, 2007: <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/87659.htm>

⁹⁴ *Hiroshima Peace Media (Chugoku Shimbun)*, September 24, 2007: "'The atomic bomb has saved millions of lives': is that true?": *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, July 3, 2007; *The Japan Times*, July 5, 2007: "Koike takes defense helm, condemns '45 A-bombings," Robert Joseph's statement was also discussed at length in many blogs online.

⁹⁵ *Sankei Shimbun*, January 15, 2017 "The bombs that they wanted to drop from the very beginning – the great massacre that they allowed because we were Japanese": <http://www.sankei.com/premium/news/170115/prm1701150012-n3.html>

Even after new views on the decision to drop the bomb started being incorporated in the American nuclear historiography since the 1960s and especially into the 1990s thanks to scholars such as Martin J. Sherwin or Barton J. Bernstein, these two incidents show how the historical role of the atomic bomb is still a very prickly question and highlight how nuclear perceptions have been shaped in different ways in the two countries. As former Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy to Japan James P. Zumwalt observes, Japan and the United States have learned to “agree to disagree” on the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁹⁶ Public opinion’s perceptions and images of nuclear weapons are in fact a very relevant issue, because not only they highlight different perceptions between the two countries, but they in turn shape the domestic political elites and influence policy-making. Scott D. Sagan and Benjamin A. Valentino’s recent research about how nuclear weapons are perceived by today’s American public shows indeed that, surprisingly, these perceptions are also very resistant to change. In fact, despite a seemingly established “nuclear taboo” that was engrained in the public’s mind since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the two political scientists conclude that even seventy years after the end of the war, the American public would actually not hesitate to approve a nuclear strike against a perceived current enemy such as Iran.⁹⁷ The results of their research, therefore, challenge the idea of a global postwar inhibition to use nuclear weapons proposed by Nina Tannenwald, and highlight the discrepancy between actual policy-making and public opinion.

The forced resignation of the former Minister of Defense Fumio Kyūma clearly shows how high the Japanese public sensitivity regarding nuclear weapons still is. However,

⁹⁶ Author’s conversation with Amb James P. Zumwalt, July 2018

⁹⁷ Scott D. Sagan and Benjamin A. Valentino, “Revisiting Hiroshima in Iran,” *International Security*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Summer 2017), pp. 41-79

did this abhorrence appear as a natural and immediate consequence of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? How was the so-called Japanese “nuclear allergy” developed in the aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

The development of nuclear imagery in postwar Japanese society

After the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, the Japanese military’s Information Division, in charge of media control, had first intended to announce that the bomb was an atomic one; however, the Department of the Interior opposed the disclosure of the nature of the weapon. That is why, on August 8, 1945, Japanese newspapers reported that “the enemy used a new type of bomb in attacking Hiroshima, but the details are still under investigation.”⁹⁸ The phrasing “a new type of bomb” was used because the expression “atomic bomb” (原子爆弾 – *genshi bakudan*) was prohibited by the Japanese government during the war.

The way the atomic bomb was first described and the limitations in its reporting certainly had a strong impact on the relationship between the Japanese public and nuclear weapons, thus altering the public’s very first perception of nuclear weapons. The phrase “a new type of bomb,” at least for the first few years after the end of the war, turned the atomic bomb into a rather mysterious entity in the Japanese collective imagination. As Hiroshima survivor Hiromi Hasai, comments, “When it happened I had never even heard about atomic bombs or disarmament issues – I was only deeply impressed with the Americans’ drastic

⁹⁸ http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/hiroshima-koku/en/exploration/index_20090210.html

way of attacking the enemy...my only thought was that we could never have beaten an enemy this strong possessing such an incredibly powerful weapon.”⁹⁹ The ban on the public use of the phrase “atomic bomb” was officially lifted when the war formally ended on August 15, 1945, which prompted Hiroshima’s local *Chūgoku Shimbun* to print a few photos of the destroyed city on August 23, and even weekly illustrated magazine *Asahi Graph* to publish a brief article on August 25 titled “What is an atomic bomb?”

However, as soon as the Allied occupation of Japan came into force on September 19, 1945, the strict press code imposed by the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), as well as the above-mentioned self-censorship imposed by the Japanese press itself were instrumental in shaping postwar Japanese popular pacifism and its relationship to nuclear weapons. The role attributed to the atomic bomb and the way it was depicted in the media, artwork, and literature in the aftermath of the bombing also channeled the popular emotion against the war itself.

The earliest publications on the bombings were made by the victims themselves but, unsurprisingly, only the ones that were deemed compatible with the GHQ censorship guidelines were published. The very first work vaguely dealing with the atomic bomb was a children’s book by female novelist Sakae Tsuboi, titled *The Song of the Millstone* (1945). The book, however, never explicitly mentions the atomic bomb and relies on a metaphor to describe the horrors of the war in Hiroshima. Other early works were written and published by two atomic bomb victims: *City of Corpses* (1946) by Yōko Ōta and *Summer of Flowers* (1947) by Tamiki Hara. These works give a description of the devastations and pain caused by the atomic bombing, however, none of them tackle the question of

⁹⁹ Author’s interview with Hiromi Hasai, Hiroshima, April 12, 2016

responsibility of the bombing, nor is there any political reflection in those books.

Yoshiaki Fukuma observes indeed that the first version of the famous 1949 book by catholic physician Takashi Nagai, *The Bells of Nagasaki (Nagasaki no Kane)*, avoided covering the atrocities caused by the bombs, and even implied that the bombings succeeded in ending the war,¹⁰⁰ liberating Japan from a crazy tyrant. Nagai's interpretation of the atomic bombings had strong religious connotations: as Monica Braw puts it, Nagai saw the city of Nagasaki as "a victim, a pure lamb, to be slaughtered and burned on the altar of sacrifice to expiate the sins committed by humanity in the Second World War."¹⁰¹ The book, written in 1946, did not pass the GHQ censorship at the time, but Nagai was determined to publish it while he was still alive. General Charles Willoughby, MacArthur's chief of the Intelligence Section, even stated that "the book could lead people to conclude that the Americans were inhumane in using the bomb."¹⁰² After years of negotiations, the GHQ gave Nagai the permission to publish it under one specific condition. It would have to be published together with a collection of documents, provided by the GHQ, describing the atrocities of the massacre committed in the Philippines by the Japanese imperial army. That is how *The Bells of Nagasaki* was finally published in 1949 attached to the collection of documents titled "the Tragedy of Manila."

The book quickly became a bestseller after its publication, and in 1950, a year before the author died of leukemia at the Nagasaki University Hospital, it was turned into the first movie dealing with the atomic bomb. However, the movie by Hideo Ōba also did not pass

¹⁰⁰ Yoshiaki Fukuma, *'Hansen' no Media-shi: Sengo Nihon ni okeru Yoron to Yoron no Kikko* (History of "anti-war" media: striking a balance between Seron and Yoron in the postwar era), Sekai Shiso Sha, 2006, pp. 202-213)

¹⁰¹ Monica Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed: American Censorship in Japan 1945-1949*, Tokyo: Liber Foerlag, 1991, p. 93

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 94

the GHQ censorship, which prohibited any discussion on the atomic bomb or depiction of radiation effects. The movie was therefore changed to simply recount Dr. Takashi Nagai's life in Nagasaki and his relationship with his beloved ones. The brief scene where the atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki is seen from outside the city where the doctor's children took refuge, with the words "the appearance of the atomic bomb ended up being the last warning to a war-crazed military government!" written across the screen. The scene, indeed, only shows one part of the doctor's destroyed house and the zooming in on a necklace with a cross is the only indication of his wife's death.

This censorship mechanism, therefore, has had an important initial impact on how the Japanese first started thinking about the specific experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, about nuclear weapons, and about peace and war.

Even when it did not have a liberating role, the atomic bomb in Japan's first nuclear imagery was not immediately considered as the supreme evil that had to be defeated, as the initial works that were allowed to be published seemed to primarily target the general atrocities of war. That is why the exceptionalism of nuclear weapons was not a concept that naturally appeared following the bombing of the two cities.

Moreover, the atrocities of the bombs were not made graphically public to the Japanese people until August 6, 1952, when the already popular *Asahi Graph* published the issue titled "Genbaku higai no shokōkai" (the first publication of the damages of the atomic bomb). Following the bombing of Hiroshima, in fact, *Asahi Shimbun* photographers Hajime Miyatake and Eiichi Matsumoto had seen their photographs confiscated by the GHQ, who also demanded that their footages be destroyed. However, the two men secretly kept copies of their work in a safe place for six years until the summer of 1952, when the

U.S. occupation of Japan officially came to an end. The August 1952 *Asahi Graph* issue on the Hiroshima bombing was immediately sold out as soon as it was published, and the *Asahi Shimbun* re-printed 700,000 copies of the black and white version of the issue.¹⁰³ The *Asahi Graph* magazine, originally launched in January 1923, was the first illustrated magazine in Japan, and was already widely popular by 1945. Despite the strong pro-imperialist reputation it had earned during World War II; immediately after the war, the magazine distanced itself from its wartime propaganda stance, rapidly becoming a mainstream medium read by all social classes in all environments.¹⁰⁴

The wide circulation of the atomic bomb's images seven years later through the *Asahi Graph* issue shows in fact the deep interest and curiosity of the Japanese public in finally being able to see the effects of the atomic bomb, and marks the first step of the development of a more concrete and informed nuclear weapon imagery in Japan.

The August 1952 *Asahi Graph* issue, which dedicated 22 out of 26 pages to the images of the nuclear devastations, represented indeed a great visual shock for the Japanese public. Although the *Chūgoku Shimbun* had already published a few devastation images earlier, the public's reaction to the *Asahi Graph* images was much more vocal. One obvious reason is the fact that the *Chūgoku Shimbun* is a local newspaper that served the Hiroshima area, and only became gradually popular after it gained its reputation in covering the atomic bombing. Another reason is that the pictures published by the *Asahi Graph* felt less abstract. The images showed not only the destruction of a city, but also the gruesome effects

¹⁰³ Prefecture of City of Hiroshima (Virtual Museum), "Miyatake Hajime, Eiichi Shashin ten – Hibaku chokugo no Hiroshima wo toru:"

http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/virtual/VirtualMuseum_j/exhibit/exh0603/exh060301.html

¹⁰⁴ Kuwahara, Suzushi, *Saihakken!! Sengo Guraifu Jānarizumu* (Rediscovery – Postwar graphic journalism), Ohta Shoten, Kikan d/SIGN, 2007

of the bomb on the people's bodies: photographs of keloid scars, severely burnt skin, or a child's completely disfigured face. Clutching the 1952 issue of the *Asahi Graph*, Hiroshima survivor Kiyoko Horiba commented in 2015 that "if those pictures of the victims were published earlier, the entire world would have understood the immorality of nuclear weapons sooner. It is so painful."¹⁰⁵

As Masafumi Suzuki comments in his *Theory of Atomic Bomb Photography*, there was a glaring lack of context around the Hiroshima and Nagasaki events,¹⁰⁶ and not only for the victims but also for any Japanese citizen outside Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The circulation of the graphic images of the devastation caused by the atomic bomb published by a national outlet in 1952 represented an important first step in bridging this gap and thus constructing the nuclear perception of the Japanese public.

This absence of context was also reflected in the way the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC) treated information on the atomic bomb survivors. The ABCC was a joint institute established in late 1946 by both the U.S. and the Japanese governments. Its official purpose was to gather first-hand technical and medical knowledge on the atomic bomb casualties and research the effects of the weapon on the human body. However, the survivors who were regularly collected and examined had no access whatsoever to the results of those medical exams. Hiroshima survivor Mitsuo Kodama recalls his experience with the ABCC:

In March 1947, at the end of the school year, several students were told by their schools to go to the ABCC. All of us were survivors of the atomic bombing. A jeep met us at the school gate. I foolishly

¹⁰⁵ Kiyoko Horiba quoted by *Asahi Shimbun*, "the 70th year message – thirty years later, message for the 100th anniversary," October 30, 2015: <http://digital.asahi.com/articles/ASHBR5DNCHBRPTIL01H.html>

¹⁰⁶ Masafumi Suzuki, *Genbaku – Shashinron: Momaku no Sensō wo megutte* (Theory of the atomic bomb photography: discussing the war of the retina), Mado-sha, 2005

thought, “This is great! No school today.” Although they took away a lot of my blood, I was content to receive a stick of chewing gum in return. For two years in junior high and one year in high school I went obediently whenever the jeep arrived (usually without prior notice).

My health was poor and diarrhea was constant, so I asked an American doctor to explain the cause. He gave me no answer. In fact, his assistant, a Japanese doctor, told me to stop asking questions.

My friend M, who was also going to the ABCC, asked our school for the results of the tests we underwent. The school offered no satisfactory reply. He and a small group went directly to the ABCC. The staff turned them away with no answer. To protest this attitude, he and three friends went all the way to GHQ in Kure.

(...) they were met by a noncommissioned officer. M demanded to see the commander. Instead, they were driven away with the order, “Never come back!” My classmates and I considered their venture heroic, but actually, it was a sad story of a defeated nation whose people and even public schools had no influence with GHQ.¹⁰⁷

It was not until after the Allied occupation came to an end in 1952 that several works started to emerge and describe the devastating effects specifically caused by the atomic bombs dropped on the two cities. Most of these early works are real life testimonies of the physical effects of the bombs, the grief and psychological pain endured by the survivors. *Hoshi wa miteiru* (“The stars are watching”), for example, published for the first time in April 1954, gathers the cries of the parents of Hiroshima who lost their children to the bomb. A manga (cartoon) version by Hiroshima-born Kazuhiko Taniguchi was released in 1957, opening the floor to the combination of a new and rapidly growing medium, the manga, with the atomic bombing theme.

Another factor in the delayed breakout of the Japanese nuclear allergy is the Daigo Fukuryū-maru (Lucky Dragon number 5) accident of March 1, 1954, where a Japanese tuna fishing boat was contaminated by nuclear fallout from the U.S. Castle Bravo thermonuclear weapon test in the Bikini Atoll. As Toshihiro Higuchi argues, contrary to a common misperception, Japan’s nuclear allergy did not stem from the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but rather from the 1954 incident. According to Higuchi, the

¹⁰⁷ Mitsuo Kodama, *HIBAKUSHA – A-bomb Survivor*; Shift Project, 2016, p. 47

Bikini incident “revealed the borderless proliferation of radioactive contamination that suddenly trapped the Japanese from the south and the north through rainwater, seawater, and foods.” The very first antinuclear movement that emerged in Japan was indeed consumerist and maternalist, as Higuchi puts it.¹⁰⁸ In fact, the traditionally conservative fishermen and subsequently a group of middle-class housewives from the Sugunami Ward in Tokyo strongly protested the fact that the revealed nuclear fallout was deeply affecting their jobs, both on the market and in the kitchen. In May 1954, the women of the National Coordinating Council of Regional Women's Associations (Chifuren), the Housewives' Association (Shufuren) issued a joint appeal to the world: “We the Japanese women are firmly determined not to let our suffering happen again to any other country in the world and not to let the ‘ash of death’ fall in the sky worldwide any longer.”¹⁰⁹ The spontaneously-emerged women's movement had a significant impact on a political level. While Shigeru Yoshida (in office 1948-1954), Prime Minister at the time, declared that Japan, “bound to the security alliance with the U.S., would cooperate with the U.S. nuclear tests;” his successor Ichirō Hatoyama (in office 1954-1956) stated that Japan “would cooperate with the ban of nuclear tests.”¹¹⁰ In the meantime, the strong protests and anxiety started in 1954 had led to the proliferation of the so-called “nuclear monsters” in the cinematographic world – *Godzilla* (October 1955) being one the most famous ones.

The nationwide protests also led to the first anti-nuclear movement, the Nihon Gensuibaku Kinshi Kyōgikai (Japan Council Against A and H Bombs), or Gensuikyō for

¹⁰⁸ Toshihiro Higuchi, “An Environmental Origin of Antinuclear Activism in Japan, 1954-1963: the Government, the Grassroots Movement, and the Politics of Risks,” *Peace and Change*, June 9, 2008

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Yoshie Kobayashi, “Anti-nuclear movement and legacies of the Cold War,” *Bulletin of Gunma Prefectural Women's University NO. 34*, February 2013

short, founded on September 19, 1955 following the first World Conference against A and H Bombs held in Hiroshima the previous month. As peace researcher Osamu Fujiwara observes, the August 1955 Conference represents the very beginning of the first Japanese peace movement. That was also the first time that the *hibakusha* spoke in public about their ordeals, which will further mark the start of the *hibakusha* movements. Following the Conference, many ordinary citizens from various social classes and backgrounds started to learn about the dangers of nuclear weapons for the first time, then spontaneously joined the movement.¹¹¹ As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the *Asahi Graph* images published three years before were critical in graphically shaking the public, and the 1955 Conference completed the task by giving a voice to those gruesome images, encouraging more and more people to be involved in peace activism. The death of Sadako Sasaki in October 1955 may also have played a role in the increasing number of people involved in peace and anti-nuclear activism and in the developing of Japan's postwar anti-nuclear identity. Sadako was a 2-year-old toddler when the atomic bomb was dropped near her house in Hiroshima. She seemed to have no apparent injuries and grew up as a healthy child, even becoming keen on sports and a member of her school's relay team. However, in early 1955, Sadako was diagnosed with leukemia, and died on October 25 of that year. While being hospitalized, Sadako set herself the goal of folding 1000 origami cranes, because according to an old Japanese tradition, anyone folding that many paper cranes will be granted a wish. Sadako's story was widely publicized, and a monument commemorating her was built with the money derived from the fund-raising campaign by school children across the nation.

¹¹¹ Osamu Fujiwara, "Gensuibaku Kinshi Undō no Bunretsu wo Megutte: Abe Kazunari no Heiwa Undōron" [The Breakup of the Ban-the-Bomb Movement in Japan: A Review of Professor Kazunari Abe's Thoughts and Activities], *Tokyo Keizai Law Review*, pp. 85-122

The statue was unveiled on National Children's Day (May 5) 1958, and thousands of colorful paper cranes offered from all over the world are hanging and surrounding the statue in the Hiroshima Peace Park to this day. Her story was made into books for children and movies, and Sadako has become the symbol of innocent victims of the atomic bomb. Sadako's story has thus contributed to the number of people involved in peace movements.

A January 1956 survey showed that 55% of the respondents were in favor of banning nuclear weapons even if that resulted in leaving anti-communist powers militarily weaker than the communist powers.” The same survey also showed that only 9% opposed banning nuclear weapons.¹¹²

In February 1957, over 350 Japanese scientists, including 181 prominent physicists,¹¹³ published an appeal requesting their British colleagues to convince the British government to stop the planned nuclear tests in Christmas



June 1960: Thousands of protesters surrounded the National Diet to demonstrate against the renewal of the Anpo Jōyaku. The violent confrontation between protesters and the police in the “Struggle Against the Treaty” (Anpo Tōsō) caused 600 injured students and the death of Tokyo University student Michiko Kanba on June 15, 1960. Prime Minister N. Kishi asked President Eisenhower to cancel his visit to Tokyo on June 19, 1960.

¹¹² Lawrence S. Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954-1970*. (Vol. 2 of *The Struggle Against the Bomb*.) Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997, pp. 8-10

¹¹³ *The Republic*, March 7, 1957, p. 22

Island, because nuclear testing was “the worst sort of crime against all human beings.” Moreover, in May, the radical student organization, the Zengakuren, launched boycotts of classes, as well as massive public rallies against nuclear weapons, counting around 350,000 students at more than 200 universities. The Gensuikyō was now fully engaged in organizing peace walks, petition campaigns, and sponsoring numerous local and national rallies against nuclear testing. In July 1957, another poll showed that 87% of the Japanese surveyed were in favor of a complete ban on atomic and hydrogen bombs.¹¹⁴

However, the rapidly growing group soon started to lose its cohesiveness in the late 1950s. In fact, although the mid-1950s witnessed the birth of anti-nuclear activism in Japan, political changes in the country had already started in 1950 with the resurgence of the right. The fierce political contrast between the conservatives and the leftists started to exacerbate, creating an ideological rift in the country. This had a significant impact on the Gensuikyō, as several conservative members who sympathized with the newly founded (1955) Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) left the anti-nuclear movement in 1959. This split was due to the lively debate on the renewal of the Treaty of Mutual Security and Cooperation with the United States (Anpo Jōyaku), which was eventually signed on January 19, 1960 amid massive protests. As Michitoshi Takabatake states, the Anpo Tōsō (“struggle against the Treaty”) that started in 1959 was mainly led by intellectuals, who gradually started to impact all layers of society, involving not only university students, but also workers and housewives.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Lawrence S. Wittner, *Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement*, Stanford University Press, 2009, p. 58

¹¹⁵ Michitoshi Takabatake, ‘Rokujūnen Anpo no Seishinshi [The History of Ideas Concerning the 1960 Anpo]’, in Tetsuo Najita, Ai Maeda and Jirō Kamishima (eds) *Sengo Nihon no Seishinshi* [The Postwar History of Ideas in Japan], Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988, pp. 70–1

Again, the fierce mobilization of several thousands of citizens had a remarkable impact on the government. In fact, both Houses of the Diet passed unanimous resolutions in favor of a ban on nuclear weapons. Moreover, most prefectural governments and more than 250 municipalities passed such resolutions within a few months.¹¹⁶ Despite having previously defended the US nuclear test, the Japanese government then retracted its decision in order to placate the public's mass anxiety. As Shin'ya Matsuura observes, the Japanese government could not afford to pick a diplomatic fight with the United States at that particular time. One reason was the need for the country to depend on the United States for financial support following the end of the U.S. occupation. The other was the window of opportunity that had appeared in front of the government's eyes exactly at the same time: the shiny promise of the lucrative nuclear power industry development that would make Japan the wealthy and powerful nation that it had aspired to be since the Meiji era.¹¹⁷

Interestingly indeed, the Japanese anti-nuclear peace activists had no unanimous or clear opinion on nuclear energy. If that was certainly the case in the 1950s when nuclear energy had just begun to enter the minds of the Japanese public, the confusion on the issue has continued up until the Fukushima disaster of March 2011. Former mayor of Hiroshima (1991-1999) Takashi Hiraoka, for example, had always be a staunch opponent of nuclear weapons and a peace activist. However, he supported nuclear energy just as staunchly. Following the Fukushima nuclear accident in 2011, Hiraoka completely changed his mind and started to oppose Japan's nuclear energy policy. Despite having visited Chernobyl

¹¹⁶ Fujiwara Osamu, *Gensuibaku Kinshi Undo no Seiritsu: Sengo Nihon Heiwa Undōno Genzō* [The Formation of the Anti-nuclear Movement: The origins of the Japanese Postwar Peace Movement], Meiji Gakuin Kokusai Heiwa Kenkyūjo, 1991, p. 44

¹¹⁷ Shin'ya Matsuura, "Genshiryoku hatsuden wo kangaeru – Denryoku Jigyō no Rekishi wo Ou – Daigo Fukuryūmaru Jiken to Hankaku Undō no Seiritsu," *Nikkei*, December 26, 2012

several times before, the former mayor says Fukushima was the event that opened his eyes on the possible negative consequences of nuclear power.¹¹⁸ Even Hiromi Hasai, physicist, *hibakusha*, and very vocal anti-nuclear weapon activist, does not have a completely consistent opinion on the matter of nuclear energy. While conceding that Japan's nuclear energy program is definitely not a success by any means, and the reprocessing program has been causing all sorts of problems, the Hiroshima survivor also claims that "it would be very wrong to put nuclear weapons and nuclear energy on the same level. While the former only causes destruction, death, and political tensions, the latter brings peace, economic growth, and – as long as there are no accidents – there is truly nothing better than nuclear energy for peaceful purposes."¹¹⁹

The role of the postwar Constitution in building Japan's pacifism

Postwar Japan, as a country, has been often described as having acquired a strong pacifist stance and identity through its postwar Constitution. According to Article 9 of the postwar Constitution, which now represents the foundation of Japanese pacifism, "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."

¹¹⁸ Takashi Hiraoka, *Jidai to Kioku – Media, Chōsen, Hiroshima* [Time and Memory – the media, Korea, and Hiroshima], Kageshobō, June 2011; author's interview with Takashi Hiraoka, April 12, 2016

¹¹⁹ Author's interview with Hiromi Hasai, April 12, 2016

The postwar Constitution promulgated on May 3, 1947, almost two years after the unconditional surrender and still under the Allied Forces occupation, has always been a fascinating topic for scholars studying Japanese history or pacifism. The Constitution, and particularly the famous Article 9 is now considered the primary symbol and keystone of postwar Japanese pacifist stance. William Middlebrooks claims that although pacifism was imposed from above on Japan, it has become “the defining element in how the Japanese see themselves in relation to the rest of the world. The impact that Article 9 has had on Japan’s collective imagination is a deep one, and it will take an almost unimaginable focus of political energy to amend a Constitution that has not been touched since its promulgation.”¹²⁰ In fact, according to a nationwide public opinion poll published in the *Mainichi Shimbun* on May 27, 1946, 69.8 percent of all respondents thought the war-renouncing Article 9 of the new Constitution was necessary, while only 28.4 percent had the opposite view.¹²¹ The majority of the Japanese people did not resist the political change that the defeat in World War II brought along, and embraced pacifism with welcoming arms. When asked about the difficulty to accept Japan’s change of direction at the end of the war, 93 year-old Yoshinori Ihara, a former member of the Atomic Energy Society of Japan, stated that “if it meant that Japan would be living in peace after the defeat, then a new identity imposed by the Americans was more than welcome. (...) Japan might not be an adult, in terms of national maturity...but that might also be part of Japanese identity.”¹²²

Following the breaking out of the Iraq War in 2003 and the opening of the domestic debate over constitutional change, Japanese intellectuals inaugurated the “Article 9 Society”

¹²⁰ William C. Middlebrooks, Jr., *Beyond Pacifism – Why Japan Must Become A ‘Normal’ Nation*, Praeger Security International, London, 2008, XV

¹²¹ Mari Yamamoto, *ibid.*, p. 6

¹²² Author’s interview with Yoshinori Ihara, May 27, 2016

in 2004. Nobel laureate and famous novelist Kenzaburō Ōe, one of the founding members of the group, stated during the opening press conference: “I was ten when the war ended, and twelve when the Constitution was promulgated and the Fundamental Law of Education was created. If I have to think about the way my life has unfolded since 1947 (...), I would definitely say that the Constitution has always been the central pillar of my existence.”¹²³ The strong and nationally widespread attachment for Article 9 is also shown in the latest poll conducted by the *Asahi Shimbun* from March to April 2017 against the backdrop of a potential Constitutional reform by the government: 63% of the respondents answered that they were against revising the article, and 29% were in favor of amending it.¹²⁴

Scholars in Japan and abroad have largely debated the origin of Article 9, and whether the Constitution of Japan was “Japanese enough,” or if its spirit was in fact completely foreign to the Japanese political and cultural tradition. While some have regarded the Constitution as an awkward product that is completely alien to Japanese culture, Kyoko Inoue, for instance, argues that despite democracy having been “imposed on the Japanese from above,” the Constitution is a powerful document that actually encompasses the Japanese spirit and reflects Japanese culture and history.¹²⁵ A nuanced view of the origin of the Japanese Constitution seems necessary, however: although mainly authored by the United States, the Constitution was not entirely an American product either, as figures such as Baron Kijūrō Shidehara (1872-1951) gave an important initial input. Shidehara was a diplomat, a bureaucrat, a politician, and Japan’s first postwar Prime

¹²³ Ōe Kenzaburō, “Statements by every founding member and their conversation with the press during the press conference,” June 10, 2004: <http://www.9-jo.jp/kaiken.html>

¹²⁴ *Asahi Shimbun*, May 2, 2017: “Poll: 50% oppose constitutional revision; those in favor rise to 41%.” Although the article points out an overall trend where people in favor of amending Article 9 are in fact increasing, the figures reported still indicate a large bias in favor of protecting the integrity of the constitutional peace clause.

¹²⁵ Kyoko Inoue, *MacArthur’s Japanese Constitution*, University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 70

Minister under the U.S. occupation. He cared deeply about peace and human rights even before World War II, and actively contributed in paving the way for the introduction of Article 9 – as Klaus Schlichtmann observes, Shidehara “marks the transition from the old to the new Japan, combining in his person the liberal-pacifist tradition of the Freedom and Human Rights movement, Taisho democracy, and pacifism in the atomic age.”¹²⁶ However, Schlichtmann also acknowledges American scholar Lawrence Battistini’s assessment of Shidehara’s role, reporting the latter’s interpretation: “Shidehara hoped to win the confidence and trust of both China and the United States in the motives and intentions of Japan in the Far East.”¹²⁷ In fact, a May 2016 documentary shows that Kijūrō Shidehara requested a 3-hour long meeting with General MacArthur on January 24, 1946, where he explained his intention of including a war-renouncing clause in the Constitution, in exchange for maintaining the Emperor.¹²⁸ In the notes of the encounter, Shidehara further explains that in his eyes, the only possible solution for Japan to be trusted by the international community in the new postwar era is a pledge to renounce war forever.¹²⁹ This interpretation is somewhat reflected in the phrase “[w]e desire to occupy an honored place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace” written in the preamble of the Constitution.

Edwin O. Reischauer, one of the most renowned Western scholars of Japan and former U.S. ambassador to Tokyo (1961-1966), stated in the late 1980s that “today no people surpass the Japanese in their devotion to pacifism. It is their great ideal, supported

¹²⁶ Klaus Schlichtmann, *Japan in the World: Shidehara Kijūrō, Pacifism and the Abolition of War*, Lexington Books, 2009, p. 324

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ryūtarō Shidehara, TV Asahi Houdou Station, May 3, 2016

¹²⁹ TV Asahi Hōdō Station, May 3, 2016

by both their emotions and their intellects."¹³⁰ While not so confident about it in his early postwar work, Reischauer seemed to have come to such a conclusion after seeing Japan's foreign and security policy so immobile for decades during the Cold War.¹³¹ The Constitution has indeed become not only an important symbol for the Japanese, but has also gradually grown into a defining element of uniqueness and pride. One of the leading constitutional scholars in Japan, Shigenori Matsui, affirms that the postwar Constitution is "quite unique in providing a pacifism principle," and "boldly renounces war powers and prohibits the government from maintaining armed forces." Yet, he then points out, the government established the Self-Defense Forces, one of the top 10 militaries in the world, without ever calling them "armed" or "military" forces.¹³² Matsui further adds that the very first paragraph of the preamble of the Constitution shows that the commitment to never go to war was the fundamental base of the document: "[w]e, the Japanese people, shall secure for ourselves and our posterity the fruits of peaceful cooperation with all nations, and the blessing of liberty throughout this land, and resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the actions of government."¹³³ The second paragraph of the preamble repeats the word "peace" four times, reinforcing once more the idea that the highest goal that the country ought to aim for is nothing but peace. The terms "peace," "peace-loving," "justice," and "faith" are juxtaposed in the same paragraph to a series of words that remind of the horrors of war, such as "tyranny and slavery," "oppression,"

¹³⁰ Edwin O. Reischauer, *The Japanese Today: Change and Continuity*, London: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1988, p. 352.

¹³¹ In his earlier works, and particularly in *Japan Present and Past*, 1946, republished in 1961 when he was President J.F. Kennedy's ambassador to Japan, Reischauer seems to have a more cautious stance on Japan's will to maintain the same pacifist Constitution.

¹³² Shigenori Matsui, *The Constitution of Japan: A Contextual Analysis*, Hart Publishing, Oxford, 2011, p.233-234

¹³³ Ibid., p. 234

“intolerance” and “fear.”¹³⁴ The nationally widespread idea of the uniqueness of the pacifist spirit of the Constitution is also reflected in the candidacy put forward by the social movement The Nobel Peace Prize for Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution (*Kenpō Kyūjō ni Nobel Heiwa Shō wo*), which, after receiving endorsements by a number of influential Japanese citizens and politicians from different parties, gathered in 2014 over 20,000 signatures across the world and submitted its candidacy to the Nobel Committee. Naomi Takasu, the housewife from Kanagawa prefecture who started the movement the previous year, explained on national TV that one of the movement’s desires and goals is to urge all countries across the world to follow the Japanese example by incorporating the peace clause into their Constitutions.¹³⁵ Jurist Osamu Nishi, however, had already debunked this claim in his 2002 essay “Current Constitutions around the World and the Peace Clause.” Nishi states that the myth of Japanese constitutional uniqueness is very common across the country, but it is just that – a myth. In the updated version of his essay (2009), Nishi comments that although this belief has become less vocal around the nation, slogans such as “the greatest goal of all is to export Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution” are still very common in Japan. He argues that in fact, 159 out of 187 nations in the world who possess a formal Constitution have included a peace clause. The professor also adds that Japan’s Constitution is not the only one to contain the war-renouncing clause: Italy, Azerbaijan, Ecuador, and Hungary also figure in the list.¹³⁶

There is in fact a significant discrepancy between how pacifist postwar Japan is

¹³⁴ The English version of the Constitution can be found at:

http://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html

¹³⁵ Naomi Takasu on NHK TV, “Kenpō Meguru Giron,” May 3, 2014

¹³⁶ Osamu Nishi, “Sekai no Genkō Kenpō to Heiwa Shugi Jōkō,” Komazawa University, 2002: <http://repo.komazawa-u.ac.jp/opac/repository/all/16886/KJ00005115605.pdf>; “Gendai Kenpō to Heiwa Shugi,” *Hikaku Kenpō –gaku kenkyū No. 21*, October 2009 issue: <http://www.japantype.com/nishi/hp/Nishi-text/gendaikenpoutoheiwashugi.pdf>

believed to be by the average Japanese citizen, and the actual degree of pacifism included in the Constitution and in Japan's security policy. This issue in turn provokes a misunderstanding between the general public, who takes pride in the myth of their uniquely pacifist Constitution, and the way the elites have been interpreting such pacifism. As Guy Almog observes, the risk is that the alleged pacifism of the public is often blurred and confused with the actual pacifist movements.¹³⁷ In fact, there seem to be three levels of pacifism in postwar Japan: the public's general and broad sentiment of pacifism as an identity to be proud of, the actual pacifist activism that is often linked to the socialist and communist ideology, and the official pacifism that the elites intend to maintain vis-à-vis the public and the international community. This differentiation, which is fundamental to understand the anti-nuclear (both weapons and energy) movements in Japan, is difficult to assess, because the elites also sometimes confuse the general public with the activists and scholars' points of views. The absolute and idealistic view that the *Kenpō Kyūjō ni Nobel Heiwa Shō wo* movement holds on the unique advantage of the Japanese Constitution, for example, is different from the frustrated remark by former Prime Minister Jun'ichirō Koizumi at the House of Representatives on June 5, 2003: "I do not want to choose peace if it means not being able to fight back invaders of our country: I do not choose a peace of slaves."¹³⁸

Leading peace researcher Johan Galtung, interviewed by the *Asahi Shimbun* in 2015 amid discussions of constitutional change, also gave an interesting insight about Japanese pacifism. The author criticized the postwar peace movements in Japan

¹³⁷ Guy Almog, "The Myth of the 'Pacifist' Japanese Constitution – Nihon Kenpō no Heiwa Shugi wa Shinwa," *the Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 12, Issue 36, Number 2, September 6, 2014

¹³⁸ Jun'ichirō Koizumi, Special committee on the reaction to an armed attack, National Diet of Japan-House of Councillors, no. 156, June 5, 2003

because they were too busy repeating the slogan “Protect Article 9!” but failed to propose any concrete strategy. Galtung further added that “nothing has changed since the first time I set foot in Japan in 1968: Article 9 is still treated as a comfortable sleeping pillow. That is why, in the meantime, the Shinzō Abe government has been able to reinterpret and destroy the spirit of that first clause of Article 9. And soon we will realize that the comfortable sleeping pillow never really existed.”¹³⁹ With this rather harsh observation, Galtung seems to suggest that the Japanese public has been living in its own “peace bubble.”

The *Asahi Shimbun*’s April 2014 surveys seems to underline these gaps of perception between the Japanese, the Chinese, and the Koreans.¹⁴⁰ Through a series of questions (49) concerning a possible amendment of Article 9, Japanese militarism, the Self-Defense Forces, and other diplomatic and security issues, the results of the survey show that the Japanese have a very positive view of their own country’s postwar performance in terms of preserving peace. Here are some examples:

Q: Do you think past history issues such as the war between Japan and China and the colonial rule over Korea by Japan have already been settled?

	Japan	China	Korea
Yes	48%	10%	3%
No	47%	88%	97%

¹³⁹ *Asahi Shimbun*, “Interview: ‘sekkyokuteki heiwa’ no shin’i – Norway no heiwa gakusha Johan Galtung” [Interview: the real intention of ‘positive peace’ – peace researcher from Norway Johan Galtung], August 26, 2015

¹⁴⁰ The survey was made in Japan by mail in February 2014. 2045 people (selected randomly from prefectures across the nation) responded to the survey. The survey in China was commissioned to a Chinese research firm (1000 respondents), and the one in Korea was commissioned to an American firm (1009 respondents). The full methodology and further information can be found at: <http://mansfieldfdn.org/program/research-education-and-communication/asian-opinion-poll-database/asahi-shimbun-special-public-opinion-poll-040714/>

Q: How would you characterize the Yasukuni shrine?

	Japan	China	Korea
Place to mourn the war dead	64%	9%	16%
Symbol of militarism	12%	77%	73%
One of the religious facilities	12%	7%	3%
No particular impression	10%	4%	6%

Q: Do you think Japan is going to pursue peace from now on?

	Japan	China	Korea
Yes	74%	21%	14%
No	17%	77%	82%

Q: Do you think Japan has been pursuing peace for around 70 years?

	Japan	China	Korea
Yes	93%	36%	19%
No	4%	62%	79%

In fact, the Japanese pacifist sentiment that was born with the end of the war and spread through all layers of the society was extremely diversified. The umbrella concept of postwar *heiwa-shugi* (peace + -ism, translated as “pacifism”) contained several different nuances precisely because every individual based the concept on their own personal experience of the war. This diversification in turn left the concept of “peace” and “pacifism” in a haze, but was hardly questioned for decades. The term *heiwa-boke* (平和ボケ) is sometimes used to describe the Japanese people’s attitude towards peace. The phrase, which echoes Galtung’s pillow metaphor, could be translated with “addicted to peace,” “peace blur,” “peace at any costs,” or even the more derogatory “peace idiot.” It implies the notion of failing to see or ignoring any threats and making strictly domestic and short-term peace the one and only goal. It is often described as an illusory and pervasive state that stems from



An example on Twitter of caricature of *Heiwa-boke*, April 24, 2017, toikoh9114

Japan’s well-engrained postwar pacifism. In a slightly mocking sense, it can be used to designate the Japanese obliviousness to crime and tendency to be gullible and trust strangers. It can however also apply to the political sphere and is a term that many right-wing Japanese like to use to express contempt and discontent about Japan’s general tendency to maintain the Constitution intact. The criticism thus targets the Japanese public’s propensity to only care about their own everyday reality and be completely oblivious to international and especially regional dynamics. Prominent

right-wing journalist Yoshiko Sakurai used the term on the September 7, 2017 issue of the *Shūkan Shinchō* magazine to criticize the Japanese public's naïve and unfazed reaction towards North Korea's missile test on August 29 that flew over Japan, blaming postwar Japan's only goal to live untroubled and peacefully.¹⁴¹ Yoshinori Kobayashi, manga artist and former director of the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, also includes the concept in his best-selling work *Sensōron* (1998), and denounces the "pacifist brain-washing" of the children by peace museums across the country.

In recent years, however, this argument has been brought up by scholars with no affiliation to the Japanese right-wing groups. Sociology professor at Kansai Gakuin Katsuya Arai has described the phenomenon using the example of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. Arai explains in an August 2014 article how his remark about the poor concept of the museum was received with shock by his students. The professor said during a lecture that "the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum is poorly made. The tone of the exhibit is aggressive and fails to stimulate the viewer's thoughts or imagination. It is definitely not a high-level museum."¹⁴² His comments were labeled as "unpleasant" and "shocking" by the students, who retorted that although the museum might not be presented in the best way possible, the Peace Memorial Museum is a necessary contribution in order to be able to reflect on the past and the present. One also added that "in order to make sure that Hiroshima would

¹⁴¹ Yoshiko Sakurai, "Heiwa-boke Nihon-jin ga yomu beki issatsu" [The one book that the peace addicted Japanese should read], *Nihon Renaissance* No. 768, *Shūkan Shinchō*, September 7, 2017

¹⁴² Katsuya Arai, "Hiroshima Heiwa Kinen Shiryōkan no Media-sei ni tsuite – Sensō to Genbaku wo Kangaetsudukeru tame ni," [The message that the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum conveys – we must continue to reflect on war and the atomic bomb] *BLOGOS Iken wo tsunagu. Nihon ga Kawaru*, August 16, 2014: <http://blogos.com/article/92598/>

never happen again, the museum has been rightfully exposing the misery that atomic bombs bring.”¹⁴³ Arai, unlike Sakurai or Kobayashi, does not identify with nationalism and revisionism, which makes the debate more relevant by bringing up the omnipresent trait of Japan’s pacifism. The professor further observes that “pushing such an exclusive and unilateral (anti) atomic bomb ideology is no different than fascism.”¹⁴⁴ Arai thus rejects the concept created by the Museum, and proposes a more interactive approach to remember the tragedy caused by the bomb, which would facilitate and encourage reflection and imagination.

Kazuhiko Tamaki, Vice President of Peace Depot, a think tank active in Japan since 1997, comments that prior to the discussion around the NPT in the 1970s, most Japanese never really thought about the issue of nuclear weapons: “the debate over the US-Japan alliance and thinking about peace were the main struggles of the 1950s, 60s, and early 70s. Nuclear weapons were only considered a problem of the war – a problem of the past.”¹⁴⁵ Indeed, while on the one hand, Japan did build an “atomic victimhood”¹⁴⁶ after the war by raising memorials, symbols, and statues, on the other hand, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were not engrained in the minds of the Japanese public as an urgent issue related to nuclear weapons. The gradual way the atomic bomb was introduced in the collective imagination since 1945, as well as the creation and spread of pacifist symbols, had the effect of detaching the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from the broader issue of nuclear weapons.¹⁴⁷ The public

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Author’s interview with Kazuhiko Tamaki, April 6, 2016

¹⁴⁶ Several authors use the expression. See, for instance, Thomas E. Doyle II or James J. Orr.

¹⁴⁷ Author’s interview with Tomoko Watanabe, April 14, 2016; Author’s interview with Michiru Nishida, Special Advisor for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Policy, MOFA, March 15, 2018

anti-nuclear sentiment is therefore understandably so strong and deep-rooted because it is a direct and natural reaction to the horrible experiences of the war. That is why the Japanese government, who had to consider strategic calculations and assure political and diplomatic survival in the aftermath of the war, has had difficulties in balancing the pacifist identity with the country's security needs.

1.3 *Pacifism and Security, Disarmament and Deterrence*

“What should we call this if not a miracle of history? Enemies that had fought each other so fiercely have become friends bonded in spirit.”

*Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Address to a Joint Session of the U.S. Congress,
April 29, 2015*

The end of World War II brought a new Japan: a Phoenix rising from the ashes, as Kenneth Henshall likes to call the country’s reemergence from complete destruction.¹⁴⁸ John W. Dower even goes as far as giving a feminine identity to Japan in the aftermath of the war: “the enemy was transformed with startling suddenness from a bestial people fit to be annihilated into receptive exotics to be handled and enjoyed. (...) Japan – only yesterday a menacing, masculine threat – had been transformed, almost in the blink of an eye, into a compliant, feminine body on which the white victors could impose their will.”¹⁴⁹ Foreign intelligence officer Kazutaka Watanabe’s document about the characteristics of “Kimochi” also tackles this issue. Watanabe states that General MacArthur’s military government discovered that the Japanese were “both easy and difficult to govern:”

It was easy because the Kimochi of the Japanese was, “We lost the war, so it’s only natural that the victorious nation should govern the Japanese people.” It was merely “force of the time.” Whatever the type of occupation, we have obeyed regardless. Criticism of the occupation policies was forbidden. Even without this prohibition we would not have criticized

¹⁴⁸ Kenneth G. Henshall, *A History of Japan: From Stone Age to Superpower* (3rd ed.), Palgrave MacMillan, 2012, p. 142

¹⁴⁹ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, W. W. Norton & Company, 1999, p. 136

the Occupation. It was an ideal Occupation without trouble. Our Kimochi agreed to the Occupation.

Governing was difficult as the purpose of the Occupation was not merely occupation for its own sake, but was democratization. The Japanese obeyed all directives from democratization to Daylight Saving Time – not because they believed in either of them, but only for “obedience’s sake.” The result was that we gladly did everything we were ordered to, but it was done irresponsibly. Our Kimochi was to obey – no more.

There was no “resistance” during the Occupation (...). We have no definite political outlook or philosophy, consequently when Democracy – or anything else – was given to us, we had nothing with which to resist. Resistance is possible only in a country where there is definite ideology or political outlook. The Japanese, with no political outlook, were neither for or against the Occupation policies. It was discouraging for the Occupation. Governing the Japanese is difficult.¹⁵⁰

Survival, for the Japanese, means being mentally flexible and working towards preserving a continuity in leadership.¹⁵¹ In a February 1947 NBC broadcast in the “Our Foreign Policy” series titled “Is Japan Changing?,” Director of the NBC University of the Air Sterling Fisher questions Ambassador George Acheson Jr. and Special Assistant to the Chief of the Division of Japanese Affairs John K. Emmerson. To Fisher’s question whether the Japanese are bitter and resent the United States, both guests respond negatively. Emmerson says: “Japanese have described to me, Mr. Fisher, with incredible calm how beautiful they thought the shining silvery B-29s were in the sky. Death and suffering of the people were, in their minds, the responsibility of the Japanese leaders and not of the Americans who were fighting the war. This is one of the principal reasons for the extremely cooperative attitude of the Japanese towards the occupation.” Acheson then adds: “there is not only actually very little resentment toward allied troops in Japan but the people in general are very friendly toward our soldiers.” Emmerson concludes: “Japanese in high and low positions, Mr. Fisher, have told me they hope the Allies will not withdraw too soon. The fact that the Japanese are genuinely friendly places a serious responsibility upon us in

¹⁵⁰ Kazutaka Watanabe, “KIMOCHI – No. 238,” October 1965, John K. Emmerson files, Box 11, Hoover Archives, Stanford California

¹⁵¹ See for example Ian Neary, *Leaders and Leadership in Japan*, Routledge, 1996

the conduct of the occupation. The chances of the permanent success of democracy in Japan will increase as we capitalize upon this advantage.”¹⁵² As Yoshinori Ihara comments, “Japan was very lucky in having a rational country like the United States guiding the Japanese after the war into the new era. Their guidance brought rationality and equality. That is why the Japanese never questioned or had a problem with their occupation.”¹⁵³ Andrew Oros, on the other hand, pragmatically observes that Japan’s security calculations in the aftermath of World War II mainly came from the reasoning that only the United States and the Soviet Union, the two superpowers, could become direct security threats to Japan. Japan therefore responded by entering into an alliance with the U.S. to protect itself militarily.¹⁵⁴

Maintaining peace through a strong alliance with the United States was in fact at the top of priority list for Japanese leaders at the onset of the Cold War. The problem, however, was that those strategic calculations were not always in line with the public’s ideal of peace and nuclear disarmament.

On August 6, 1952, the documentary drama *Children of Hiroshima* by Kaneto Shindō was released. Commissioned by the Japan Teachers Union and based on 105 real testimonies collected by Hiroshima survivor and professor Arata Osada, the docudrama follows Takako, a teacher from Hiroshima who returns to her hometown a few years after the bombing, only to find all her old friends and acquaintances alive but suffering from different diseases caused by the bomb. In this work, which made it to the American theaters for the first time

¹⁵² Department of State, “CONFIDENTIAL RELEASE FOR PUBLICATION AT 7:00 P.M., E.S.T., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1947. NOT TO BE PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED, QUOTED FROM OR USED IN ANY WAY, “Speeches and Writings, Miscellaneous Notes” by John K. Emmerson, John K. Emmerson files, Box 11, Hoover Archives, Stanford California

¹⁵³ Author’s interview with Yoshinori Ihara, May 27, 2016

¹⁵⁴ Andrew Oros, *Japan’s Security Renaissance: New Policies and Politics for the Twenty-First Century*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2017, p. 39

in April 2011, the moment of the bombing is shown in a sequence that blends real footage and artistic, surreal scenes: the clock that stops at 8:15, a brief and bright flash of light, sunflowers quickly dying, animals struggling, a ghost-like woman's naked body floating and bleeding, the mushroom cloud, and close-ups of people's faces staring at the light. The sequence ends with the image of the shadow left by a man who was sitting on the steps of the Sumitomo Bank and who was immediately burnt down to ashes, leaving only his own shadow. The steps have been donated by the bank to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, where they are still exhibited under the name "Human shadow etched in stone." The movie was submitted to the Cannes Festival the following year; however, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, concerned that its distribution would compromise relations with the United States, sent an emergency top secret telegram to Japanese Ambassador to France Kumao Nishimura, urging him to force the festival to turn down its candidacy or at least exclude it from the competition. After discussing the matter with the French Foreign Ministry, Ambassador Nishimura responded that an intervention by the Japanese government would only attract too much public attention to the issue, and that it would be wiser to let the festival organizers decide. Director Kaneto Shindō stated in an interview in 1999 that he "had no idea that the government was feeling and acting so nervous about his work."¹⁵⁵ This obstruction attempt by the Japanese government reveals in fact its postwar political priorities and highlights the beginning of the "Kabuki Play" that Masakatsu Ota has described in the conceptual twist of Japan's nuclear policy.

The Cannes incident, in fact, is an early manifestation of the trade-off that the Japanese government has been tied to for more than seventy years: pleasing the domestic audience

¹⁵⁵ *Asahi Shimbun Evening News*, "Children of Hiroshima: US trouble – obstructing the show," July 15, 1999

in maintaining a pacifist image, and trying to respond to Japan's security needs in order to survive in the successive postwar and post-Cold War orders.

In fact, the Japanese political leaders also embraced the American proposal of storing U.S. nuclear weapons in Japan starting in 1955, which again highlighted the discrepancy with the public. Then Prime Minister Ichirō Hatoyama, asked in March 1955 by foreign reporters how Japan would respond to a U.S. request of storing nuclear weapons in Japan, replied: "if we currently justify peace through strength, then we will have to allow the storage of nuclear weapons on Japanese soil."¹⁵⁶ Hatoyama understood the mechanisms of the Cold War and the Eisenhower administration's need to implement the Massive Retaliation strategy. Hatoyama's response, however, was not received well by the public, and was severely attacked by the Japanese Socialists and Communists during Diet debates.¹⁵⁷ Hatoyama was eventually forced to officially withdraw his statement by confirming at the Diet that "the storage of nuclear weapons would be a violation of the Constitution."¹⁵⁸

In September 2001, historian and author of an official Nobel Peace Prize history Oivind Stenersen told reporters that Eisaku Satō was the Committee's "biggest mistake." In fact, the Three Non-Nuclear Principles policy, along with his efforts for Japan's signature of the NPT, had earned Prime Minister Eisaku Satō the Nobel Peace Prize on December 11, 1974, exactly seven years after his declaration of the nation's non-nuclear policy. According to the Committee of the Prize, Eisaku Satō represented the will for peace of the Japanese people, and his work was to be considered a great step towards nuclear

¹⁵⁶ The National Diet of Japan, Record of House of Councilors Session No. 3-20-8, March 14, 1955

¹⁵⁷ The National Diet of Japan, Record of House of Councilors Session No. 3-31, March 15, 1955

¹⁵⁸ The National Diet of Japan, Record of House of Councilors Session No. 3-32, March 24, 1955

disarmament and peace.¹⁵⁹ The prize was also awarded to him for his efforts in signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1970 and for establishing Japan's official non-nuclear policy. Stenersen's book *The Nobel Peace Prize – One Hundred Years for Peace* criticized the choice of the Committee, noting that awarding the prize to Satō was, in fact, not received warmly in Japan, both by the public and by the left-wing parties. His opponents questioned how a strong supporter of U.S. military actions in Asia and of the U.S. nuclear deterrent was deserving of such an honor.¹⁶⁰ The book states that “[s]ome reacted with disbelief, others with laughter and anger,” adding that Japanese women's organizations also contested the prize to Satō because he had supported the United States in the Vietnam War.¹⁶¹

The dilemma between pacifism and security is in fact also translated into the catch-22 that still finds the Japanese government juggling between disarmament and deterrence. Former Hiroshima Mayor Takashi Hiraoka's frustrated comments that “people from other countries point out that Japan preaches to others about abolishing nuclear weapons while, at the same time, it relies on U.S. nuclear arms for its own security,” and “when I tell them that the citizens of Japan are doing their utmost for peace, they aren't convinced and dismiss this as double-talk”¹⁶² expresses the powerlessness felt by many disarmament activists in Japan. However, the government has created a conceptual division that does not see deterrence and disarmament as conflicting.

¹⁵⁹ Tore Frängsmyr and Irwin Abrams, *Nobel Lectures in Peace*, World Scientific Pub Co Inc, 1997, p. 66-68; the motivations are also available on the official website of the Nobel Prize: www.nobelprize.org

¹⁶⁰ Fintan Hoey, *Satō, America and the Cold War: US-Japanese Relations, 1964–72*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2015, p. 180

¹⁶¹ *The Japan Times*, September 6, 2001

¹⁶² *Chūgoku Shimbun*, “The US nuclear umbrella, past and future”, Hiroshima Peace Media Center, 12-27-2008. English version of the article here: [http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/mediacenter/article.php?story=20081226170930777_en; author's interview with Takashi Hiraoka, April 12, 2016](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/mediacenter/article.php?story=20081226170930777_en; author's%20interview%20with%20Takashi%20Hiraoka,%20April%2012,%202016)

In fact, government officials and policy experts see them as two different components of the country's nuclear policy. Disarmament and deterrence are thus seen as both equally indispensable for Japan, and not at all inconsistent.¹⁶³ Amb. Kazutoshi Aikawa stated in May 2018 at a conference in Washington, D.C. that “pursuing the goal of disarmament cannot and should not be conducted without taking into account the security considerations and implications. In the same vein, maintaining a robust and credible extended deterrence and pursuing the disarmament goal are not contradictory. (...) As Japan, a non-nuclear state under the NPT, faces such serious security challenges and threats (...), its disarmament policy cannot and should not be pursued, without giving due consideration to its security concerns. To ensure its security against such regional security concerns, the extended deterrence is imperative for Japan. That, however, does not mean in any way that Japan is just reactive or takes the security situations as given. On the contrary, Japan proactively pursues its diplomatic undertakings to improve the security situation regionally and globally, in joint efforts toward creating the condition to build a world without nuclear weapons.”¹⁶⁴

This conceptual distinction echoes with Anthony DiFilippo's description of Japan's approach as “selective disarmament” that make neighboring states call Japan out on its perceived hypocrisy, or even wonder what Japan's real intentions are. The Japanese government has always remained silent whenever the United States conducts nuclear experiments,¹⁶⁵ with the exception of the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, who wrote

¹⁶³ Author's interview to Michiru Nishida, February 8, 2018

¹⁶⁴ Kazutoshi Aikawa, Deputy Chief of Mission and former Director-General of the Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department, MOFA at Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA's Annual Security Forum, May 2, 2018

¹⁶⁵ Anthony DiFilippo, *Japanese Nuclear Disarmament Policy and the US Security Umbrella*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2006

letters of protest to the U.S. President.¹⁶⁶ As Hiroshima Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki stated in 2016, “there is definitely a gap in perception between Hiroshima and the rest of Japan on nuclear weapon issues. Living in Hiroshima makes it feel like everyone in Japan is naturally thinking about nuclear issues, but when I go out of my city, I have to readjust to the general national lack of awareness of these important issues. This is also evident in the way the media reports about the annual Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony, for example: Hiroshima is the only city that shows the entire ceremony on TV, while the NHK in Tokyo only dedicates twenty minutes to it. In other parts of Japan they don’t even talk about it!”¹⁶⁷ Additionally, even within Hiroshima, there are clashing positions regarding the question of disarmament. In fact, while Governor Yuzaki agrees with the ruling LDP’s line that disarmament should follow a step-by-step cooperation process, according to former mayor Hiraoka, for example, the government should take a bolder stance and start declaring immediately that it will be striving towards the complete abolition of all nuclear weapons, and proposing a specific deadline for this goal.¹⁶⁸

The “step-by-step” approach that the Japanese government has been promoting is in fact the challenge of maintaining deterrence in the short-term, and seeking disarmament in the long-run. This challenge has become more pressing and evident after the Cold War, and especially in recent years. An example is Japan’s vote at the United Nations Assembly General on October 25, 2016, against the initiative to launch negotiations on a nuclear weapons ban. Japan, along with four of the nuclear states (United States, Great Britain, France, and Russia), decided to vote against the proposed resolution because the

¹⁶⁶ A collection of all the letters of protest written and sent by the Mayors of Hiroshima can be found here: <http://www.city.hiroshima.lg.jp/shimin/heiwa/kakumenu.html>

¹⁶⁷ Author’s interview with Hiroshima Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki, April 14, 2016

¹⁶⁸ Author’s interview with former Mayor of Hiroshima Takashi Hiraoka, April 12, 2016

government would prefer a step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament, which some have called not only disappointing, but also hypocritical.¹⁶⁹ Tokyo's move would therefore reflect the government's reliance on U.S. END, while stripping the country of moral credibility in its disarmament efforts. Three days after the vote, at the press conference, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, who is originally from Hiroshima and has always highlighted this personal detail in his political career, stated that "Japan's actions and position have been consistent throughout. Our position is to emphasize cooperation between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states."¹⁷⁰ Again, the issue of the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty (NWBT), adopted in July 2017, has created a divide between the government and the public opinion and especially peace activists in Japan. The very vocal Japanese branch of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) has been leading a pressure campaign against the government in order to join the NWBT as soon as possible, because Japan's reputation as an atomic victim is at stake.¹⁷¹ The disarmament vs. deterrence issue has also divided Japanese scholars and experts in two categories, who study either disarmament (*gunshuku*) or deterrence (*yokushi*). As Heigo Sato, professor of international relations at Takushoku University in Tokyo comments, "there are two academic communities in Japan, dealing with nuclear issues: the "disarmament" camp, and the "deterrence" one, and they do not talk to each other." The two communities have their own events and conferences, and have not attempted to find a common platform to discuss the two issues together.¹⁷² Furthermore,

¹⁶⁹ *The Japan Times*, "Japan's hypocritical nuclear stance", November 3, 2016

¹⁷⁰ Press conference by Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, October 28, 2016:

http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/kaiken/kaiken4e_000315.html

¹⁷¹ Author's interview with Akira Kawasaki, February 20, 2018

¹⁷² Author's interview with Heigo Sato, February 19, 2018; Heigo Sato's remarks at the Stimson Center's event "Balancing Between Nuclear Deterrence and Disarmament: Views from the Next Generation," March 19, 2018; author's interview with Sugio Takahashi, February 19, 2018; author's interview with Hirofumi

the two MOFA Bureaus who work on the issues, the North American Affairs Bureau and the Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department, neither interact nor feel the need to consult each other.¹⁷³

The “Three Disarmament Reductions” (the three Rs) proposed by former Minister Kishida in 2014 suggest that in order to accomplish the goal of disarmament, there should be:

- a) A reduction of the number of nuclear weapons;
- b) The reduction of the role of nuclear weapons;
- c) The reduction of the incentive for possession of nuclear weapons.¹⁷⁴

Current Foreign Minister Tarō Kōno, however, released an immediate statement the morning after the Trump Administration’s Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) was issued on February 2, 2018, stating that “Japan highly appreciates the latest NPR which clearly articulates the U.S. resolve to ensure the effectiveness of its deterrence and its commitment to providing extended deterrence to its allies including Japan. (...) Japan will strengthen the deterrence of the Japan-U.S. Alliance by closely consulting on the extended deterrence, including nuclear deterrence, through the Japan-U.S. Extended Deterrence Dialogue and other consultations.” The statement ends with “Japan, as a leading state towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, will continue to closely cooperate with the U.S. to promote realistic and tangible nuclear disarmament, while appropriately addressing the actual

Tosaki, February 19, 2018; authors’ interview with Takashi Kawakami, February 21, 2018; author’s interview with Tatsujiro Suzuki, February 21, 2018; author’s conversation with Masakatsu Ota, February 19, 2018

¹⁷³ Author’s interviews with two MOFA officials who prefer to remain anonymous, February 24, 2018 and March 15, 2018

¹⁷⁴ Fumio Kishida, “Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Policy Speech by H.E. Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, at “Dialogue with Foreign Minister Kishida,” Nagasaki University, January 20, 2014: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000028597.pdf>

security threats.”¹⁷⁵ ICAN Vice-Chair Akira Kawasaki pointed out the worrying discrepancy between the second point of the Three Rs, and the fact that the Trump NPR has virtually given a greater role to nuclear weapons.¹⁷⁶ Kawasaki also expressed concern that the government’s continuous mixed signals are a sign that Japan’s step-by-step is in fact a one step forward, two step backwards approach with regards to disarmament.¹⁷⁷ This conceptual distinction, therefore, created by the Japanese government to be able to pursue the two goals simultaneously, has had the effect of maintaining both a strong pacifist national identity and a solid alliance with the United States.

¹⁷⁵ The Release of the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) (Statement by Foreign Minister Taro Kono), February 3, 2018: https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_001893.html

¹⁷⁶ See, for example, Steven Pifer, “Questions about the Nuclear Posture Review,” Brookings Institution, February 5, 2018

¹⁷⁷ Author’s interview with Akira Kawasaki, February 20, 2018

Conclusion:

Japan's postwar construction of its pacifist identity and anti-nuclear sentiment is a crucial component of Japan's nuclear hedging stance, precisely because of its perceived uniqueness and credibility as *hibakukoku*.

The nationwide anti-nuclear sentiment that arose following the Lucky Dragon incident in 1954 merged with the postwar pacifism that naturally developed as a reaction to the atrocities of war. The pacifist anti-nuclear identity was then forged also through important symbols of uniqueness that are still relevant today, such as Hiroshima's anti-nuclear symbols, and the 1946 Constitution and in particular its article 9. The popularity of peace studies and the spread of the pacifist and antimilitarist ideal also led the Japanese government to perform a conceptual division between the disarmament and deterrence policies. This conceptual distinction has resulted in two different fields of expertise, with the two coexisting on a bureaucratic level but not fully interacting. This separation within the country's nuclear policy has helped preserving both side: keeping the national pacifist identity as a valid argument against Japan's potential nuclearization. LDP member and former Executive Director of the International Energy Agency Nobuo Tanaka's half-joking but very provocative comment that "Japan should not stop its nuclear energy program in any case, but Japan is credible when it says it will not go nuclear precisely because of Hiroshima and Nagasaki...we have to thank the U.S. for that!"¹⁷⁸ perfectly captures the role that the government has unintentionally assigned to the postwar antinuclear pacifism within Japan's nuclear hedging posture. Because Japan is a *hibakukoku*, its commitment to non-

¹⁷⁸ Author's discussion with Nobuo Tanaka, June 25, 2018

proliferation is credible, which in turn legitimizes the maintaining of the civil nuclear energy program.

CHAPTER II

Japan's Nuclear Bargain Part II: “We Have Finally Captured the Sun”

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<i>p. 153</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>

Introduction:

In 1994, the *Mainichi Shimbun* revealed¹⁷⁹ that on September 25, 1969, a MOFA senior researchers team had drafted an internal document titled “Guidelines for National Foreign Policy”, that stated that “despite signing the NPT and renouncing on possessing tangible nuclear weapons, Japan would preserve the right to constantly maintain its economic and technological capabilities for the development of nuclear weapons, and will protect this right against any obstruction.”¹⁸⁰ Indeed, just over seventy years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan holds 48 metric tons of weapon-usable plutonium.¹⁸¹ Moreover, Japan is entrapped in the controversial policy of reprocessing, which is accompanied by a variety of hazards: Japan is a seismically unstable country and the excess plutonium poses a major proliferation concern if stolen by terrorists.¹⁸² Conservative politicians and bureaucrats in Japan, as well as the Japan Business Federation, Keidanren, have been adamant to promote and sell the idea of a “virtuous nuclear energy cycle” (*kaku nenryō kōjunkan*) that is clean and self-sustainable.

The second part of Japan’s Nuclear Bargain therefore constitutes the substantive aspect of Japan’s nuclear hedging posture; the creation of its nuclear latency. This chapter will show that starting a nuclear energy program was felt by the Japanese government as

¹⁷⁹ The article, written by nuclear engineer Arjun Makhijani, appeared on the *Mainichi Shimbun* on August 1, 1994. Quoted by Robert Fred Mosley, *The Politics and Technology of Nuclear Proliferation*, University of Washington Press, 1998, p. 171; quoted by *Mainichi Shimbun*, “Nuclear-Armed Japan is Not Out of Question”, Takao Yamada, March 25, 2012

¹⁸⁰ Full text of the document available (in Japanese) on the MOFA website: http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/kaku_hokoku/pdfs/kaku_hokoku02.pdf

¹⁸¹ The Japanese government pledged in July 2018 that Japan will make efforts to reduce the national stockpile of plutonium. However, no concrete plan has been presented yet.

¹⁸² The doomsday cult Aum Shinrikyō, who was responsible of the Tokyo subway sarin gas attack in March 1995, was actively contacting and recruiting nuclear physicists and tried to develop nuclear and chemical weapons.

necessary and vital for Japan's postwar growth. It will first look at the manner and timing the decision of introducing the program was made. It will then focus on the way nuclear energy was marketed and promoted, marking the emergence of a nuclear energy culture. In the final section, the chapter will tackle the more recent attempts by the Japanese government to maintain nuclear latency despite a series of technical challenges plaguing the country's civil nuclear program.



Schoolchildren watching a demonstration of “The Magic Hand,” Hiroshima ‘Atoms for Peace’ Exhibit, November 1956. “The Magic Hand,” designed for the remote handling of radioactive material, was used at the exhibit to pour liquid from a bottle to a cup, or for calligraphy with a brush. (source: Archives of Hiroshima City)

2.1 *Japan's Nuclear Choice*

The official turning point in Japan's nuclear policy arrived on December 8, 1953, less than a decade later from the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. President Dwight Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" speech at the UN Assembly General, meant to create an organization that would promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy, was welcomed very enthusiastically by Tokyo. As Yoshinori Ihara recalls, the speech did not have an immediate impact on the Japanese public: "It is only gradually that the public came to realize the importance of President Eisenhower's plan," Ihara states.¹⁸³ According to a January 1953 note by the U.S. embassy in Tokyo to the U.S. Department of State, it is not only the public that was not aware of how crucial nuclear energy was, but the Japanese government, too, did not show any interest in it prior to President Eisenhower's speech later that year. Ambassador Robert D. Murphy expresses surprise when writing "The contrast between the fairly aggressive Belgian attitude on the subject, both on the part of scientists as well as the Belgian government, and the complete absence of pressure from the Japanese government and on the part of Japanese scientists, is puzzling."¹⁸⁴

In fact, it was one man's timely insight that altered the course of Japan's history. Yasuhiro Nakasone had just entered the Diet as a member of the House of Representatives

¹⁸³ Author's interview with Yoshinori Ihara, May 27, 2016

¹⁸⁴ Note from U.S. Ambassador in Tokyo Robert D. Murphy to R. Gordon Arneson, Special Assistant to the Secretary, Department of State, January 28, 1953, Record Group 59, Declassification Review Project NND 832918, Box 5665, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD

for the Democratic Party in 1947, campaigning with a deeply nationalist platform, and was building a reputation as a young and bold politician. His first encounter with the nuclear realm was when he was a young naval officer serving in Takamatsu, and saw the atomic bomb explode on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. According to his memoirs, he was deeply impressed, and knew that it was going to be an important opportunity for the future of Japan. He writes: “I saw the mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb. That image will never fade from my memory. That lit a fire within me to develop atomic energy. Since that moment, I knew that the future of the nuclear age had begun.”¹⁸⁵ The idea of Japan embracing nuclear power will be politically implemented by Nakasone, but it is noteworthy that in 1952 already, nuclear physicist Taketani Mitsuo had written in his essay “The Direction of Japan’s Nuclear Research” (October 1952) that “*because* Japan was the only nation who had suffered atomic bombs, it has a right to pursue nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.” The physicist also added that because the Japanese were the victims of the “shadow” of nuclear energy (military use), they had the special right and duty to pursue the “light” (peaceful purposes) that atomic energy could bring.” Moreover, he argued that not to invest in atomic energy would hinder Japan’s chances of becoming a “great nation.”¹⁸⁶

As Jacques Hymans argues, the beginning of the nuclear energy program in Japan had a strong political component.¹⁸⁷ Indeed, Nakasone immediately had made a clear connection in his mind between atomic bomb and nuclear energy, and skillfully seized the opportunity with the Atoms for Peace speech in December 1953. Earlier in 1953, in fact,

¹⁸⁵ Yasuhiro Nakasone, *Seiji to Jinsei* [Politics and Life], Kodansha, 1992, p. 75

¹⁸⁶ Mitsuo Taketani, “Nihon no genshiryoku kenkyū no hōkō,” *Kaizo II zokan*, 1952, pp. 70-72

¹⁸⁷ Jacques Hymans, “Veto Players, Nuclear Energy, and Nonproliferation: Domestic Institutional Barriers to a Japanese Bomb,” *International Security*, October 2011

Nakasone attended a summer course on atomic energy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology,¹⁸⁸ where he was approached by “Coulton,” a Counter Intelligence Corps agent, who invited him to a seminar organized on July 7 by Henry Kissinger, at the time working on his doctoral degree at Harvard University. Forty-five people from twenty-two countries gathered at the university in order to attend the event. After the seminar, Nakasone met with Hideo Yamamoto, a businessman from Asahi Glass and with a student from Columbia University, in order to obtain more information on nuclear technologies. Yamamoto noted that Nakasone was very interested in nuclear weapon technology: “because Nakasone was in favor of remilitarization of Japan, I believe he might have thought that Japan ought to acquire domestic nuclear weapons.”¹⁸⁹ After the East Coast, Nakasone flew to San Francisco and, guided by Japanese nuclear physicist Ryōkichi Sagane, he visited the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, whose director Ernest Lawrence had worked for the Manhattan Project. As Etel Solingen remarks, Nakasone’s trip was not only informative, but it was an effort to expand his network of foreign contacts as well.¹⁹⁰ That is why, sensing the imminent overture for nuclear power in the U.S., he chose a very favorable moment to push the introduction of nuclear energy in Japan. After returning from his travels, in March 1954, Nakasone submitted a budget request for an additional JPY 250 million for science and technology, JPY 235 million of which would be allocated for the construction of a nuclear reactor and JPY 15 million towards research on uranium. The proposed bill

¹⁸⁸ Etel Solingen, *Scientists and the State: Domestic Structures and the International Context*, University of Michigan Press, 1994, p. 112

¹⁸⁹ Yūkō Fujita, “*Military Aspects of Japan’s Nuclear Policy*,” paper presented at the Annual Meeting of Japan’s Physicists’ Association, March 14, 2011: <http://www.kageshobo.co.jp/main/books/kakushitekakubusousurunihon.html>; *Asahi Shimbun*, July 21, 2011; also see *Asahi Shimbun*, *Kakunenryō Saikuru wo Nakasone ga Suishin shita honto no nerai*, August 2011 (The Real Reason why Nakasone promoted the Nuclear Fuel Cycle)

¹⁹⁰ Etel Solingen, *ibid.*

was approved by the Diet on April 3, and Nakasone later proudly commented that the JPY 235 million he asked for the nuclear reactor had a highly symbolic value: the number was indeed inspired by uranium 235.¹⁹¹ He is also quoted saying, “the scholars and academics in Japan are careless, that is why we need to wake them up by slapping their cheeks with a bundle of money.”¹⁹² It is unclear if Nakasone truly said that, as he himself later denied it, but what is certain is that it sounded foreboding of the cold relationship between the government-industry world and the scientists and academics.

This was not only a political starting move, indeed, but it was also a very swift one. The Japan Science Council, who would have preferred longer discussions and consultations before allocating the funds, was taken aback by the rapidity of Nakasone’s move.¹⁹³ On April 23, 1954, the Science Council criticized the government for this quick decision, and announced the “Three Principles of Nuclear Energy,” drafted by physicists Kōji Fushimi and Seiji Kaya, that nuclear researchers were to follow:

1. democracy;
2. independence;
3. transparency.

These Principles, which also included the idea of using nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes, were eventually approved by the Diet in October 1954, and later incorporated in the Basic Law of Atomic Energy (1956).

While Nakasone might have had nuclear weapons in mind,¹⁹⁴ Yoshinori Ihara, at

¹⁹¹ Ibid.,

¹⁹² Hitoshi Yoshioka, *Genshiryoku no shakaishi: Sono nihonteki tenkai (A Social History of Nuclear Power: Its Development in Japan)*, Asahi, 1999, p. 64

¹⁹³ Seiji Kaya, “The Activities Shown by Dr. Fujioka at the Initial Stage of the Peaceful Use of Atomic Energy in Japan,” Yoshio Fujioka Commemorative Issue, The Institute for Optical Research, Tokyo University of Education, 1967

¹⁹⁴ Among others, Morris Low, *Science and the Building of a New Japan*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005, pp.

the time Division Chief at the Science & Technology Agency (STA) of the Ministry for International Trade and Industry (MITI), firmly assures that no one among his colleagues had ever thought of the link between nuclear weapons and atomic energy. He remembers his excitement and sense of mission when in February 1955, he was sent for eight months by the government to the newly-established International School of Nuclear Science and Engineering at the Argonne National Laboratory near Chicago:

We were thirty-nine people total, with only two delegates from Japan, my late colleague Akira Ōyama and myself. We knew Japan was severely lacking energy resources, so we were determined to learn everything we could from the United States for our country's future. The level was extremely advanced, and I truly wanted to do my best for my government and my country – I studied all day long every single day...I don't think I have ever studied that hard in my life!¹⁹⁵

The school taught these international students the technical language, the design, construction, and operation of experimental nuclear reactors. Despite its efforts to establish an international network of nuclear experts, at the time the United States were falling behind the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union as far as practical use of the reactors was concerned. That is why the school emphasized U.S. advancement and superiority in nuclear power generation to form a generation of young experts and teaching them the structure of prototype reactors and showing them boiling water reactors built by General Electric. Ihara and Ōyama were only the first ones of around fifty Japanese students to be invited by the Argonne National Laboratory during the following ten years. Those who took part in the International School, indeed, formed the first generation of Japanese bureaucrats, engineers and experts on atomic energy. Some started working at the STA (later replaced by the Japan Atomic Energy Agency), others, like Ōyama, became professors at the most prestigious University of Tokyo, when it established Japan's first nuclear engineering department in

113, 162–163

¹⁹⁵ Author's interview with Yoshinori Ihara, May 27, 2016

1961. Other alumni of the International School were employed as staff at Mitsubishi, Toshiba and other nuclear reactor manufacturers.

As Hitoshi Yoshioka comments, it is still unknown why Nakasone, known for his populism, nationalism, and interest in nuclear weapons, chose the United States to expand his knowledge and network of nuclear energy.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, as soon as the U.S. Atomic Energy Law of 1946 was amended on August 30, 1954 to facilitate foreign exchange of information with other nations, Nakasone proposed the plan to introduce nuclear materials and nuclear technology directly from the U.S. Hyman's view that the Japanese nuclear energy program started with a political intent is therefore true, but to a certain extent: if Nakasone had had a serious intention to build a military nuclear program at that time, it is difficult to think that he himself accepted a Japanese nuclear energy program that would be extremely dependent to the American one.

The already powerful MITI was the agency that administered most of the nuclear budget through the STA, and the government also established a Preparatory Committee for the Peaceful Use of Atomic Energy, which then led to the creation of the Japan Atomic Energy Commission (JAEC - *Genshiryokuiinkai*) in January 1956. Nakasone also started to expand his alliances and network in order to surround himself of like-minded figures, and appointed successful businessman Matsutarō Shōriki, as Chairman of the newly-founded JAEC. As Nakasone himself recounts, he legally ensured that the Prime Minister followed the decisions made by the JAEC, making it in turn a very powerful agency.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Hitoshi Yoshioka, *Genshiryoku no shakaishi: Sono nihonteki tenkai (A Social History of Nuclear Power: Its Development in Japan)*, Asahi, 1999, p. 67

¹⁹⁷ Yasuhiro Nakasone, "Kagaku Gijutsuchō Setsuritsu Made no Omoide," (Memories Up Until the Establishment of the STA), in *Kagaku Gijutsuchō: 30 Nen no Ayumi* (The Science and Technology Agency: a 30 Year History), Tokyo, Sōzō, 1986, p. 95

That was made possible by a mechanism where the JAEC reported to the Prime Minister through the Chairman Shōriki, who also was a Minister in the Prime Minister's Cabinet. Other influential JAEC members appointed by Nakasone also include theoretical physicist and first Japanese Nobel laureate Hideki Yuzawa; businessman Ichirō Ishikawa, the powerful Chairman of the Keidanren; the economist Hiromi Arisawa from the University of Tokyo, and the physicist Yoshio Fujioka. The government and the industry were the two major actors for activities related to nuclear energy: the former took the initiative for nuclear research, while the latter focused on the development side of it.¹⁹⁸ The physicists were of course included in both sides of the process and played an important role, also bringing great credibility in this nuclear initiative. However, the relationship between the scientists and the government started to sour when Chairman Shōriki made a surprise announcement on January 5, 1956. He announced that Japan would sign an atomic energy agreement with the United States, and attempt to achieve nuclear power within five years. His unilateral announcement was followed by the physicists' surprise, skepticism, and concern that Shōriki would use his position and power at the JAEC merely to fulfill his ambitious plans of grandeur. The Nobel laureate Hideki Yukawa, who was considered as the voice of caution by the press¹⁹⁹ and added great credibility to this government's project, threatened to resign from the JAEC, but Nakasone convinced him not to. Yukawa, who had accepted the job reluctantly, was indeed shocked to realize how politicized the JAEC was.²⁰⁰ He resisted as a JAEC member until March 1957, when he finally resigned citing his poor health. His official resignation created an unbalance in the process, and gave more

¹⁹⁸ *Asahi Evening News*, September 30, 1957

¹⁹⁹ *Asahi Shimbun*, January 6, 1956

²⁰⁰ Morris Low, *Science and the Building of a New Japan*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005, pp. 113, 162–163

power to the advocates of atomic energy inside the government and the business world, who were eager to develop nuclear energy using any foreign technology and material.²⁰¹

In fact, Shōriki was already leaning towards importing the British nuclear reactors to Japan, which were considered the most advanced in the world at the time. Ihara recalls:

I started working for Mr. Shōriki, and I submitted a report that concluded that the plants he wanted to import may work in Great Britain, but they would not be very useful in Japan. Shōriki yelled at me: ‘petty bureaucrats like you should just shut up!’ He was definitely not the type to give up that easily.²⁰²

The U.S. government, indeed, was taken aback by Shōriki’s announcement that British nuclear reactors would be more suited for Japan, and tried its best to “offset the advantage already gained by the British.”²⁰³ In that period, in fact, the United States, through the Atomic Energy Commission, invited several groups of Japanese bureaucrats and scientists to the United States following industrialist and first STA Chairman Ichirō Ishikawa’s trip to the United Kingdom. Frank A. Wary of the U.S. embassy in Tokyo wrote to the Department of State:

(...) the United States has been at a serious disadvantage in recent weeks by reason of the fact that Matsutaro Shoriki, State Minister and Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, has expressed a serious interest in buying a British power reactor 100,000 kilowatt capacity. In fact, Shoriki made this statement a few hours after his formal meeting with Dr. Marvin Fox, leader of the Brookhaven Team, which was recently in Japan. It was easy to infer from the publicity given to this statement that Shoriki distinctly favors an arrangement with the British rather than with the United States. Adverse publicity of this kind, as well as the advantage gained by the British as a result of the Ishikawa mission, might be partly offset if the United States were to extend a formal invitation to Ishikawa to visit the United States after he completes his studies in Britain.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Hitoshi Yoshioka, *Genshiryoku no shakaishi: Sono nihonteki tenkai (A Social History of Nuclear Power: Its Development in Japan)*, Asahi, 1999, p. 78; Tetsuji Imanaka, interview with the author, April 15, 2016

²⁰² Author’s interview with Yoshinori Ihara, May 27, 2016

²⁰³ Note from Frank A. Wary, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs to Howard Parsons, Acting Deputy Director, Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, Department of State, Department of State, July 10, 1956, Record Group 59, Declassification Review Project NND 877404, Box 5097, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

As Yoshioka notes, the choice of Shōriki's British Calder Hall natural uranium-fueled, graphite-moderated, gas-cooled reactor would mean that Japan could produce high quantities of plutonium and even convert it to weapon-grade plutonium, which the U.S.-made reactors could not do.²⁰⁵ It is unclear whether Shōriki was as aware as Nakasone of the potential nuclear weapon capability of the nuclear plants, however his impatience for the introduction of a new stunning technology is closely connected to the climate of nuclear euphoria that he had created with the help of the U.S. government.

²⁰⁵ Hitoshi Yoshioka, "Forming a nuclear regime and introducing commercial reactors", pp. 91-92

2.2 *Creating a Nuclear Energy Culture*

The competition for the selection of the most suitable location for the Japanese Atomic Energy Research Institute (JAERI), created in 1956 with the Atomic Energy Basic Law, was also affected by that atmosphere of technological hunger. When, in 1955-1956, the JAERI started searching for a location, multiple towns aggressively competed against one another for the honor of being the one to host the national symbol of the future. These candidates would hang banners saying “Welcome Nuclear Research!” As Hirofumi Utsumi says, although not many people from the public nor politicians had any knowledge of atomic energy, it is possible that the sole idea of being able to reach the same level as other advanced countries constituted a great motivation to accommodate any nuclear initiative.²⁰⁶

Going back in our story to the day after President Eisenhower’s “Atoms for Peace” speech at the United Nations, the three major Japanese newspapers, the *Asahi Shimbun*, the *Mainichi Shimbun* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, all published the President’s announcement as headlines of their evening editions. Through a study of the media of that time, Shun’ichi Takekawa demonstrates how all three newspapers, and not only JAEC Chairman, businessman, and media mogul Matsutarō Shōriki’s *Yomiuri Shimbun*, were more than enthusiastic about the new “friendlier face” that the atom had started to show. Moreover,

²⁰⁶ Hirofumi Utsumi, “Nuclear Images and National Self-Portraits: Japanese Illustrated Magazine *Asahi Graph*, 1945-1965,” *Annual Review of the Institute for Advanced Social Research* vol. 5, 2010

on December 10, all three newspapers dedicated op-eds titled “The U.S. President’s new proposal” (*Asahi*), “A new path for nuclear issues” (*Mainichi*), and “Erasing the horrors of the nuclear era” (*Yomiuri*). All three articles hoped that the President’s speech would open the dialogue between East and West, and slow down the nuclear arms race.²⁰⁷ In its article, the *Mainichi Shimbun* sang the praises of the ground-breaking announcement, describing it as “practical and productive” and stating that atomic energy would be able to “turn the horrors into hope,”²⁰⁸ which echoed Mitsuo Taketani’s 1952 essay. The *Yomiuri Shimbun*’s article, employing a similar tone, argued that the world ought to make efforts to effectively ban nuclear weapons and use atomic energy for peaceful purposes only.”²⁰⁹ In fact, Shōriki’s *Yomiuri Shimbun* dedicated a series of thirty-one articles between January 1 and February 9, 1954 under the very symbolical title “Tsuini Taiyō wo Toraeta” (Finally We Have Captured the Sun).²¹⁰ The *Yomiuri Shimbun* also blended the ideas of the shining sun and human happiness: the subtitle of the series was indeed “can nuclear power bring happiness to humans?” and described the various ways atomic energy could serve man.

²⁰⁷ Shun’ichi Takekawa, “Drawing a Line between Peaceful and Military Uses of Nuclear Power: The Japanese Press, 1945 – 1955”, *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, September 2012: <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Shunichi-TAKEKAWA/3823>

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ *Yomiuri Shimbun*, “Tsuini Taiyō wo Toraeta” (“Finally we captured the Sun”), January-February 1954

The articles featured in the series dealt with the history of the nuclear research, and although they also covered military uses of atomic energy, they made sure to portray the two sides in opposite manners: the evil atomic bomb of the past and the bright energy of the future. The first article of the series, titled “We are Uranium,” starts with a compelling and moving little story of how the research on cyclotrons was dumped into the Tokyo Bay by the GHQ after the war: “Daddy, who was standing nearby and staring at that scene, was sobbing and dabbing his eyes with his handkerchief,” says the article. The “Daddy” mentioned in the piece is Japan’s founding father of atomic research, physicist Yoshio Nishina. During the war, Nishina was commissioned by the Imperial Navy to secretly develop nuclear weapons. One of his scientific results for that purpose was, indeed, his cyclotron research. In October 1945, after Japan’s surrender, Nishina asked the occupying forces for permission to continue using his remaining cyclotrons for biological and medical research. Permission was initially granted, then rescinded under orders from the Secretary of War Henry Stimson. Every cyclotron in Japan was destroyed, and the ones from Nishina’s Institute of Physical and Chemical Research were all disassembled and thrown into the Gulf of Tokyo. The 1954 article, however, never mentions any link between this cyclotron research and imperial Japan’s goal to acquire nuclear weapons.²¹¹

Shōriki, who had been briefly arrested under the GHQ Occupation for suspicion of being a class-A war criminal, represented a very useful tool for the United States government at the time. In the United States’ eyes, his fierce anti-communism, combined with his power in the media and flair for business, indeed, could be used as great leverage to counter any left-wing leaning in Japan’s postwar unstable government: he was indeed

²¹¹ Tadanori Hayakawa, *Genpatsu Utopia Nihon [Nuclear Utopia, Japan]*, Gōdō Shuppan, 2013, p. 008

the right man at the right time for the United States. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Japanese politics were still underdeveloped and unstable, and the Japanese government's (especially Nakasone's) efforts related to nuclear energy might have given not only a new sense of purpose, but also a semblance of political centrality.

For the United States, as Timothy Temerson argues, the main objective of the postwar U.S.-Japan alliance was a double containment: on the one hand, against the communist bloc, and on the other hand, against the return of a militarist Japan.²¹² This would in fact be the core meaning of the Security Treaty signed by the United States and Japan on September 8, 1951: by sealing a formal agreement, the United States sought to simultaneously defend themselves against a communist encroachment as well as controlling any straying in the future path of Japan.²¹³ Richard Samuels also points out three scenarios that the United States feared at the time: firstly, the possibility of Japan's rapid remilitarization which could eventually escalate into a revanchist military attack against the United States; secondly, a deeply unstable Japan that would have needed strong U.S. attention for years to come, and finally, the possibility that Japan could secure a separate peace with the communist countries and allow them easy access for political and industrial influences.²¹⁴

The campaign to widely instruct the public about this wonderful new opportunity had therefore barely started, when the Lucky Dragon no. 5 incident occurred on March 1, 1954, inevitably affecting the public opinion. Shōriki, through the power of his media (not only he owned the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, but he was also the founder of the first postwar

²¹² Timothy Temerson, *Double Containment and the Origins of the US-Japan Security Alliance*, MIT-Japan Program, 1991, pp.91-94: <https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/17094>; in his work, Temerson attributes the phrase "double containment" to then Secretary of State Dean Acheson.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Richard Samuels, *Securing Japan – Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, Cornell University Press, 2007, p.39

commercial television, Nippon TV) and his now known connections with the CIA,²¹⁵ started to fix the strong nuclear allergy of the Japanese people by promoting the peaceful uses of the atomic energy.²¹⁶ Jun'ichirō Yamaoka, indeed, describes Shōriki as having a “brilliant mind” and as being “very skilled in mass manipulation.”²¹⁷ As mentioned in Chapter I, the initial fierce protest that erupted following the incident had a consumerist and maternalist twist, rather than an ideological one, which might have also made it easier for the general public to be subjected to Shōriki's media campaign.

Already on March 22, 1954 indeed, U.S. Assistant to Secretary of Defense G.B. Erskine submitted a memorandum titled “Japan and Atomic Tests” to the National Security Council Operations Coordinating Board. The document prompted the U.S. government to make a decision to build a reactor in Japan: “[a] vigorous offensive on the non-war uses of atomic energy would appear to be a timely and effective way of countering the expected Russian effort and minimizing the harm already done in Japan.”²¹⁸ This “vigorous offensive” planned by the United States found a good ally in Japan. On December 30, 1954, Shōriki's personal secretary and journalist Hidetoshi Shibata met CIA agent Daniel Stanley Watson at “Minamoto,” a sushi restaurant in Tokyo, and explained to him the rising anti-American sentiment of the Japanese public. “There is a saying in Japanese,” Shibata said, “doku wo motte doku wo seisu” (literally “poison drives out poison”) – in other words, set a thief to catch a thief. In order to erase the anti-American and anti-nuclear sentiment in the minds of the Japanese, we should give them hope by spreading the idea of a peaceful nuclear

²¹⁵ Tetsuo Arima, *Nippon Terebi to CIA – Hakkutsu sareta “Shōriki file”* [Nippon TV and the CIA: the “Shōriki file” revealed], Shinchōsha, 2006

²¹⁶ Randy Taguchi, *Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Fukushima*, Chikuma Shobō, Tokyo, 2011, pp. 118-119

²¹⁷ Jun'ichirō Yamaoka, *Genpatsu to kenryoku*, Tokyo, Chikuma Shobō, 2011, pp. 56-71

²¹⁸ *Japan Press Weekly*, “A Memo by US Assistant Secretary of Defense”, October 3, 2011; John Swenson-Wright, *Unequal Allies? United States Security and Alliance Policy Toward Japan, 1945-1960*, Stanford University Press, 2005, pp. 181-182

energy.”²¹⁹

The growing public unease vis-à-vis nuclear issues and the United States constituted indeed the perfect moment for Shōriki to seize the opportunity that he had been waited for since even before the Lucky Dragon incident. Interviewed by the NHK in the mid-1980s, Watson stated: “Shōriki was sharp, asking all the right questions (...). Japan is the ideal country in the world to make an appeal because it is the only industrial country without much domestic, natural resources. Then I saw a flash in Shōriki’s eyes.”²²⁰

In a December 31, 1954 CIA telegram, indeed, General Dynamics president John Jay Hopkins’ mission to Japan from May 9 to 16, 1955 to promote the peaceful use of atomic energy is described as the most efficient propaganda means to transform Japanese public opinion, which still held a grudge because of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings and the Bikini Atoll incident.²²¹ This lingering and growing resentment, as well as the tumultuous climate of anti-American protests that broke out in Japan after the Lucky Dragon incident was made public, profoundly surprised the U.S. government, who strongly denied the serious consequences of the incident. The president of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Lewis Strauss, publicly declared that the natives of the Marshall Islands “appeared to me to be well and fine,” and that these nuclear developments were a great step towards a peaceful use of atomic energy.²²² Moreover, Strauss reported to the

²¹⁹ NHK Gendaishi Scoop Document “Scenario for importing nuclear energy: strategy for Japanese nuclear energy in the Cold War, March 16, 1994; Hitoshi Yoshioka, *Shinpan: Genshiryoku no Shakaishi*, Asahi Shimbun shuppan, 2011; Fukurai, Krooth, Edelson, *Nuclear Tsunami: The Japanese Government and America’s Role in the Fukushima Disaster*, Lexington Books, 2015, all citing Shibata’s personal memos.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ The document is available at: (<http://www.foia.cia.gov/>); also cited in *The Economist*, “Japan’s Citizen Kane”, December 22, 2012; Toshiyuki Tanaka, “Genshiryoku Heiwa Riyō to Hiroshima” *Sekai*, August 2011, p. 253

²²² Lewis Strauss, quoted by A. Costandina Titus, *Bombs in the Backyard: Atomic Testing and American Politics*, University of Nevada Press, 2001, pp. 47-48. Not only Strauss, but also President Eisenhower writes in his memoirs that the boat was located in the hazardous area (Lawrence Wittner, *Confronting the Bomb, A*

spokesperson of the White House that the Lucky Dragon boat was acting as a Soviet spy, an argument which was later rejected by the CIA.²²³

The Lucky Dragon accident was indeed quickly getting out of hand for the United States: U.S. ambassador in Tokyo John Allison expressed great concern and frustration in his May 20, 1954 telegram to the Department of State titled “Fukuryu Maru,” and describes the event as a first test of postwar U.S.-Japan relations. “Conclusions are unpleasant, some even ominous,” the ambassador announced, before starting a long alarmed message describing Japan as a nation with various flaws. It is interesting to note how Allison speaks of the country as if it were a problematic pupil: “Severe deficiencies in security, administrative discipline, emotional stability, and cooperativeness have been exposed. Even though we understand extraordinary emotional strain this incident imposed on Japan, we will have to take into account these weaknesses.”²²⁴ These words resonate with Michael Hunt’s description of racial attitudes of “condescension and contempt” that U.S. policymakers displayed occasionally.²²⁵ Allison then goes on to describe the stressful political background during which the accident happened. Allison lists the coincidence in time of the accident with the introduction of nuclear energy in Japan, an internal government crisis, and a “curious ambivalence in Japanese character” (while being horrified by the prospect of war in the Far East, Japan “craved [the] occasion to assert its

Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, Stanford University Press, 2009, pp. 147).

²²³ Lawrence Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb, A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement 1954-1970*, Stanford University Press, 1997, pp. 146-147; Margot A. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age*, University of California Press, 1997, p. 45; Oliver Stone e Peter Kuznick, *The Untold History of the United States*, Random House, 2012, p. 270

²²⁴ Telegram by US ambassador in Tokyo John Allison to State, Archives of the Department of State, doc. No. 762, May 20, 1954, 2 pm, Subject: Fukuryu Maru: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v14p2/d762>, FRUS, Vol. XIV, part 2, “China and Japan”

²²⁵ See exploration of these attitudes in Michael Hunt, *Ideology and US Foreign Policy*, Yale University Press, 1987

position and remind [the] world of its importance.”), then he comments that a “[p]eriod of uncontrolled masochism ensued, as nation aided by unscrupulous press, seemed to revel in fancied martyrdom, and U.S.-Japanese cooperation broke down. For a time, on Fukuryu Maru incident, government in Japan ceased to govern.”²²⁶ In a telegram nine days later, Secretary of State John F. Dulles comments that “[t]he Japanese are pathologically sensitive about nuclear weapons,” stating that “they feel they are the chosen victims of such weapons.”²²⁷

The Bikini Atoll incident had therefore tangibly shaken U.S.-Japan relations to the point where the Department of State stated that the relations were subjected to the greatest stress since World War II, and that providing nuclear reactors to Japan and including the country in nuclear energy development programs would be an efficient way to remove this sentiment.²²⁸

The *Yomiuri*, therefore, played a crucial role in sponsoring and promoting various “nuclear exhibits” across Japan starting in 1955, whose long-term objective, according to Hitoshi Yoshioka, was to undermine the anti-nuclear weapon movement and the rising anti-American sentiment that was steadily spreading across the country.²²⁹

After the first exhibit in Tokyo named “The Nuclear Energy Exhibit: Peace and

²²⁶ Telegram by US ambassador in Tokyo John Allison to State, Archives of the Department of State, doc. No. 762, May 20, 1954, 2 pm, Subject: Fukuryu Maru: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v14p2/d762>, FRUS, Vol. XIV, part 2, “China and Japan,” again, a reference to Michael Hunt’s research on US policymakers’ attitudes: “Japan was seen as schizoid: “the Prussia of the East.” (...) one side of his split personality was thought to reflect an indigenous warrior tradition. Treacherous and armed with modern weapons, militaristic leaders controlled their own “emotional population” (...). The other side of the Japanese character was represented by forward-looking, Western-oriented civilians eager to promote international cooperation.” Ibid., p. 140

²²⁷ US Department of State, document no. 763, Memorandum by J. Foster Dulles to President Eisenhower, Washington, DC, May 29, 1954: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v14p2/d763>

²²⁸ *Mainichi Shimbun*, July 24, 2011, quoting declassified NARA documents

²²⁹ Hitoshi Yoshioka, *Shinpan: Genshiryoku no Shakaishi*, Asahi Shimbun shuppan, 2011, pp. 69-70

Progress for the Entire Humankind” was organized in August 12-22, 1954 to commemorate the ninth anniversary of the atomic bombings, Shōriki’s newspaper accepted to co-sponsor a longer and much publicized exhibit organized by the U.S. government. The *Yomiuri*’s decision was celebrated on November 1, 1955 with a Shinto purification ceremony in Tokyo, the same day of the opening of the exhibit that would stay on for six weeks.²³⁰ On that occasion, U.S. Ambassador John M. Allison publicly read a message by President Eisenhower in which he stated that the event was “the symbol that both countries had decided to dedicate the great power of nuclear energy to peace,” which represented a “crucial step for the U.S.-Japan relationship.”²³¹ A message by Japanese Prime Minister Ichirō Hatoyama was also read during the ceremony, where he expressed great joy in both countries’ initiatives to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes.²³²

The city that was chosen for the construction of the first nuclear reactor was, of all places, Hiroshima. As Olga Belogolova observes, atomic energy quickly became the best solution to divert the attention from the diplomatic disaster that the nuclear accident had caused, as well as a great opportunity to promote a benevolent and generous image of Washington.²³³ This idea is indeed reflected in a speech by AEC Commissioner Thomas E. Murray, who stated that “(...) while the memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki remains so vivid, construction of such a power plant in a country like Japan would be a dramatic and Christian gesture which could lift all of us far above the recollection of the carnage of those cities.”²³⁴ The rhetoric used in a September 28, 1954 article from the *Herald Tribune* is

²³⁰ Toshiyuki Tanaka, “Genshiyoku Heiwa Riyō to Hiroshima” (Hiroshima and the peaceful use of atomic energy), *Sekai*, August 2011

²³¹ *New York Times*, November 1 1955, “Japan Welcomes Peace Atom Show”, by Robert Trumbull

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ Olga Belogolova, “Why Japan can’t quit nuclear power”, *National Journal*, February 15, 2013

²³⁴ *The New York Times*, “NUCLEAR REACTOR URGED FOR JAPAN; T.E. Murray of A.E.C. Tells Steel Union Step Is Vital in Atom Race With Russia”, September 22, 1954

quite interesting and explicitly states the dual purpose of the project:

A nuclear reactor in Japan would, in truth, be a lasting monument to our technology and our good-will in a nation which felt the power of the one and has earned the warmth of the other since the war. It would also make amends, insofar as amends can be made, to the victims of the first atomic bombs used in warfare. But more than good-will is involved. The Soviet Union has refrained from joining the world atomic pool for peace proposed by President Eisenhower. (...) Japan is the one country that we cannot let slip behind the Iron Curtain for lack of nuclear power. It is now the advance base of our Pacific defense system.²³⁵

The *Washington Post*, in an op-ed titled “A Reactor for Japan,” also supported the initiative, describing Murray’s idea, then commenting: “How better, indeed, to dispel the impression in Asia that the United States regards Orientals merely as nuclear cannon fodder!”²³⁶ And indeed, a few months later on February 4, 1955, Congressman Sidney Yates proposed the plan to the President in order to “make the atom an instrument for kilowatts rather than killing.”²³⁷ Yates’ letter to Eisenhower made the following points:

- The intention to turn Hiroshima into the heart of atomic energy for peaceful purposes;
- The construction of a nuclear plant in Hiroshima would be completed in three years;
- The residents of Hiroshima would benefit from the construction of a nuclear plant more than from a hospital.²³⁸

Curiously, while Yates’ proposal was met by some mixed reactions from the Eisenhower administration, the mayor of Hiroshima, Shinzō Hamai (who was later nicknamed “nuclear mayor”), happily welcomed the idea, commenting that the nuclear

²³⁵ *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, September 28, 1954, “Amends for Hiroshima”, the article is available at: <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1755&dat=19540928&id=XZkcAAAIBAJ&sjid=1GQEAAAAIBAJ&pg=1769,4773589>

²³⁶ *The Washington Post*, “A Reactor for Japan”, September 23, 1954

²³⁷ *Washington Post*, “Belgium and Japan Seek 1st 'A-for-Peace' Power”, February 15, 1955

²³⁸ Toshiyuki Tanaka, “Genshiryoku Heiwa Riyō to Hiroshima” (Hiroshima and the peaceful uses of atomic energy), *Sekai*, August 2011, p. 251

plant could be used as a memorial for the atomic bomb victims: “the fact that Hiroshima could become the first city run by atomic energy can only bring comfort to the souls of the dead. I believe our citizens would like to see death replaced by life.”²³⁹

Hamai’s stance was also supported by scientists from Hiroshima University and other local experts during a conference organized by a local newspaper in January 1955. Ran Zwigenberg notes that the acceptance of the proposal cannot be considered an aberration.²⁴⁰ In fact, it was part of the development plan to revive the city of Hiroshima, dubbed “the City of Peace” in the aftermath of World War II. The plan was approved by referendum on July 7, 1949, and was made into law on the anniversary of the bombing on August 6, 1949.²⁴¹ Hamai’s wish to replace death with life, therefore, was aligned with the promotional campaign organized by the Japanese and the American authorities throughout the summer of 1949 to re-launch the local economy and turn Hiroshima into a symbol of peace, progress, and spiritual rebirth.²⁴² The campaign was indeed successful, as Hiroshima is today a very modern city with new buildings and the word “peace” is indeed frequently used in the names of avenues, monuments and buildings. Some politicians, including mayor Hamai, even went as far as to claim that the city of Hiroshima was “reborn on August 6, 1945.”²⁴³

²³⁹ “Heiwa Riyō – Hibakuchi mo ichiyoku” [Peaceful uses of nuclear energy: Hiroshima has a role too], *Chūgoku Shimbun Peace Media Center*, July 19, 2011

²⁴⁰ Ran Zwigenberg, “The Coming of a Second Sun”: The 1956 Atoms for Peace Exhibit in Hiroshima and Japan’s Embrace of Nuclear Power, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* Vol 10, ed. 6 no 1, February 6 2012: <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Ran-Zwigenberg/3685>

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² The idea of spiritual rebirth was also included in Tange Kenzō’s project, the architect who was in charge of Hiroshima’s reconstruction. Nuclear energy was seen by Tange as the perfect opportunity to turn the city into a “peace factory” (“heiwa wo tsukuridasu tame no kōjō de aritai”, *Kenchiku Zasshi*, October 1949, Ran Zwigenberg, op. cit., 2012)

²⁴³ Hamai Shinzō et al. to the dean of Carroll College, June 30, 1950, Carroll University Library, Waukesha, Wisconsin, Ran Zwigenberg, op. cit., 2012

This collective goal explains why many of the *hibakusha* and pacifists welcomed this message of peace. “I believe in a nuclear research that could bring peace to the people,” said professor and pacifist activist Arata Osada.²⁴⁴ Some activists of the *Gensuikyō*,²⁴⁵ however, were unconvinced. The Hiroshima branch of the Council immediately showed its disapproval of a nuclear plant for their city. During a conference in January 1955, Council representative Ichirō Moritaki expressed his doubts on the radiation effects of such a project, which had the consequence of splitting the audience into two sides. Both sides used the experience of the atomic bombing in defending their stance. Moritaki added that the “people of Hiroshima, ‘baptized’ by the history’s first atomic bomb, was opposed to the nuclear project without an informed discussion on the consequences.”²⁴⁶ Later, the Hiroshima *Gensuikyō* sent a report to the press where it listed the main objections against the construction of the first nuclear plant in the city. On top of the list was the concern that the nuclear reactor could be converted for military uses, thus becoming an easy target for yet another nuclear attack in the future.²⁴⁷ Although not being completely opposed to the nuclear plan, the local newspaper, the *Chūgoku Shimbun*, which is still a proud survivor of the atomic bomb, also published a series of articles by doctors and scientists who warned of the different risks of nuclear waste.²⁴⁸

This heated debate died down rapidly in Hiroshima, as President Eisenhower ultimately did not approve Sidney Yates’ proposal. However, even without a plan to build the first plant in the city, Hiroshima started to be exposed to the benefits of nuclear energy

²⁴⁴ Toshiyuki Tanaka, “Genshiryoku Heiwa Riyō to Hiroshima”, *Sekai*, August 2011, p. 251

²⁴⁵ Totten and Kawakami, *Gensuikyō and the Peace Movement in Japan*, *Asian Survey*, May 1964.

²⁴⁶ *Chūgoku Shinbun*, gennaio 1955. The articles are also available on: <http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/>

²⁴⁷ *Chūgoku Shimbun*, March 3, 1955

²⁴⁸ *Chūgoku Shimbun*, January 29-30, 1955

shortly after that through the exhibit “Atoms for Peace,”²⁴⁹ which was touring the less developed parts of Japan after its first leg in Tokyo. The Hiroshima exhibit is particularly interesting to look at, because it was the only one that was sponsored not only by the local newspaper like in other cities, but also by the prefecture, the city, and even the Hiroshima University. The exhibit was co-organized by the United States Information Agency (USIA), and was held in Hiroshima from November 1 to December 12, 1956. The objective of the exhibit was to draw attention to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy: generate electricity, cure cancer, preserve food, control insects and boost scientific research. The military uses of nuclear energy were completely omitted. Its brochure, a 35-page colored pamphlet, defined atomic energy as the “key of the future” and explained how it had the power to feed and satisfy the entire population. A hundred thousands of these brochures were thrown from U.S. military aircrafts around the towns of Iwakuni, Hiroshima, and Kure, while Shōriki’s Nippon TV constantly broadcast ads and special documentaries on the peaceful uses of atomic energy.²⁵⁰ Shōriki’s exceptional collaboration with the U.S. “atomic Marshall Plan for Japan”²⁵¹ had brought him increasing power and success; he was going to “keep playing the nuclear energy card” to now try to dominate the political world as well.²⁵²

²⁴⁹ For an international perspective of the exhibit “Atoms for Peace,” see Spencer R. Weart, *The Rise of Nuclear Fear*, 1988

²⁵⁰ Matthew Jones, *After Hiroshima: The United States, Race and Nuclear Weapons in Asia, 1945-1965*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 321

²⁵¹ CIA document, December 31, 1954, available at <http://www.foia.cia.gov/>; Toshiyuki Tanaka, op. cit., p. 253

²⁵² Toshiyuki Tanaka, op. cit., p. 253



Nuclear Exhibit “Atoms for Peace” in Hiroshima: a worker shows an elementary school class how a nuclear fission reaction works, November 1956 (source: Archives of Hiroshima City)



Brochure produced for the Hiroshima “Atoms for Peace” exhibit, November 1956 (source: Archives of Hiroshima City)

In fact, an October 1956 telegram from the U.S. Embassy in

Tokyo to the USIA shows that the United States was indeed thinking ahead and planning to bring the first nuclear reactor to Japan as soon as possible. The Embassy believed that operating the first nuclear reactor will be “extremely useful in promoting peaceful uses (...) in Japan” and “demonstrating goodwill.” However small, the telegram read, the first operating nuclear reactor in Japan will “arouse great interest, and could be [the] central feature [of an] atom exhibition [in] Tokyo consisting largely [of] Japanese exhibits.”²⁵³

²⁵³ Telegram from US Embassy in Tokyo to USIA, Record Group 306, October 13, 1956, NND 949670, Box 504

USIS reported that between 1954 and 1955, the Japanese public opinion on atomic energy saw a “spectacular” change: “Through an intensive USIS campaign, atom hysteria was almost eliminated by the beginning of 1956, Japanese opinion was brought to popular acceptance of the peaceful uses of atomic energy.”²⁵⁴ However, a poll conducted by USIS itself in April 1956 showed that 60% of the Japanese people was convinced that atomic energy would be “a curse for the humanity, rather than a benefit.” Moreover, only 25% of the Japanese people believed that the disarmament efforts by the United States were credible.²⁵⁵

Furthermore, in June 1956, the *Mainichi Shimbun* criticized the U.S. propaganda campaign in an op-ed: “first a baptism of radioactive rain, and now a wave of shameless promotion under the name of ‘Atoms for peace!’”²⁵⁶ The article in the newspaper also invited the Japanese to “assess in a rational way whatever is hidden behind the Japanese pursuit of nuclear energy staged by white hands.”²⁵⁷

Despite this initial resistance, USIS’s aggressive campaign saw its fruits a few years later. In a confidential report titled “Report on USIS-Japan,” professor of psychological warfare at Yale University Mark May wrote that after his visit in Japan in July 1959, he could assess that while in 1956 70% of Japanese associated the word “nuclear” to “harmful,” in 1958 the result had dropped to 30%.²⁵⁸ Peter Kuznick observes that the desire

²⁵⁴ Kenneth Osgood, *Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad*, University Press of Kansas, 2008, p. 179; Matthew Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 321

²⁵⁵ Benjamin Sovacool and Scott Victor Valentine, *The International Politics of Nuclear Power*, Routledge Global Security Studies, 2012, p. 109

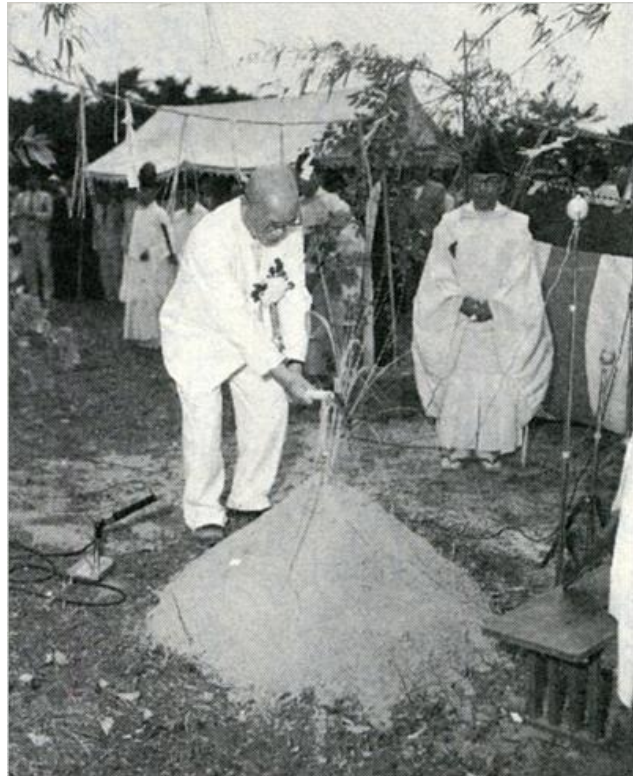
²⁵⁶ *Mainichi Shimbun*, June 1956; *The New York Times*, “Tokyo Press Stirs Ire of Americans”, June 8, 1956

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ Mark May had visited Japan for five weeks between June and July 1959 in order to interview USIS members and US embassy representatives (*Kyōdō News*, “USIS role revealed in Japan’s tilt toward West”, November 21, 2007 by Hiroki Sugita)

of the Japanese government to turn the country into a modern, industrial and technologically advanced nation eventually succeeded in convincing the people that atomic energy was clean and safe – Japan seemed to have forgotten the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.²⁵⁹

This claim would imply a sudden change in identity for Japan from nuclear victim to a business-oriented opportunist stance. Shintarō Yoshimura comments, in fact, that the enthusiasm and euphoria with which Tokyo had embraced atomic energy while secretly preserving its nuclear weapon option, is an abnormal behavior for a “*hibakukoku*,” a country with a nuclear victim status.²⁶⁰ The nuclear euphoria and



Shōriki Matsutarō at the Shintoist purification ceremony of the soil of Tōkai-mura (Ibaraki pref.), to prepare the ground for Japan's first nuclear reactor, August 1956 (source: National Diet Library, Tokyo)

enthusiasm that Yoshimura describes, indeed, cannot only be explained by a simple desire to modernize the country, but it could also be understood as Japan's first postwar awakening to a possible change of identity. As Hiroshima *hibakusha* and nuclear physicist Hiromi Hasai commented on the World War II defeat, “our first reference point was gone

²⁵⁹ Peter Kuznick, “Japan's Nuclear History in Perspective: Eisenhower and Atoms for War and Peace”, *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, April 13, 2011

²⁶⁰ Shintarō Yoshimura, *Kaku-kakusan mondai to Ajia*, Kokusaishoin, 2009, p. 23-24

so suddenly and unexpectedly. The emperor had deceived us all, and yet he was still alive...I couldn't understand that. My whole existence was turned upside down and I felt powerless and lost. Then nuclear energy arrived and our life was lifted again: I saw the future destiny of Japan in atomic energy."²⁶¹ In other words, and symbolically speaking, the first Sun was gone, and was replaced by a second Sun. This newfound sense of purpose might have affected many in Japan, as they identified atomic energy with the country's bright future. In fact, a parallel can be drawn between the nuclear euphoria that was rapidly born in those years, and the relative flexibility to drastic political and cultural change with which Japan had entered the Meiji era in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Meiji era (1868–1912) was indeed a glorious, but also most turbulent time in Japanese history. As Morris Low states, the Meiji Restoration “ushered in a program of modernization that involved not just opening Japan to trade with the West but participating in a global system of knowledge—‘foreign intercourse’ in the broadest sense of the term.”²⁶² During this period, Japan enthusiastically adopted Western-style systems of politics, economics, education, science, technology and medicine, and transformed itself into a modern, industrialized nation. Japanese industry started dominating trade in East and Southeast Asian markets. The Japanese military defeated the Chinese army and navy in 1894–1895, and also vanquished Russian forces on land and at sea in 1904–1905. As Chapter I showed, Japan had become the model for other Asian countries who were desperately trying to modernize themselves. The promise of nuclear energy, symbolized as a rising sun, thus echoes the unique success of Meiji Japan.

²⁶¹ Hiromi Hasai, interview with the author, April 12, 2016

²⁶² Morris Low, *ibid.*, p. 2

After the 1956 nuclear exhibit in Hiroshima, an international conference on atomic and hydrogen bombs was also organized in Nagasaki. The conference rigorously focused on peaceful nuclear uses, emphasizing its great benefits. Makoto Kitanishi, a professor at Hiroshima University, recalls that “atomic energy was the symbol of scientific and technological progress. It was unthinkable to criticize science.”²⁶³ Second-generation Hiroshima *hibakusha* and nuclear engineer Tetsuji Imanaka also observed, “people were euphoric about nuclear energy in the 1950s and all the way up until Fukushima. By choosing nuclear engineering, we were promised a long, bright and prestigious career. I believe we were completely deceived by that promise and new sense of national purpose. I was one of them, but I only realized it much later.”²⁶⁴



²⁶³ Hiroshima Peace Media Center, *Chūgoku Shinbun*, Takashi Hiraoka, “Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy: Hiroshima’s Role”, July 13, 2011

²⁶⁴ Tetsuji Imanaka, interview with the author, April 15, 2016

2.3 *Nuclear Latency and a Rocky Nuclear Program*

Jacques Hymans concludes that by the early 1960s already, the Japanese nuclear energy program was well out of its political phase.²⁶⁵ Nonetheless, Japan's civilian nuclear program kept growing and creating a state of nuclear latency through its expansion and sophistication.

Scholars still struggle with the definition of nuclear latency: while some argue that a precise definition is needed, others claim that a general and inclusive definition is sufficient. But most experts agree that Japan can be considered the epitome of a nuclear latent country, due to its nuclear fuel cycle, delivery systems, and expertise.²⁶⁶ The pioneering study on nuclear latency was the 1977 book *Swords from Plowshares*, conducted by an interdisciplinary team of scholars led by nuclear strategist Albert Wohlstetter. The study splits non-nuclear weapons states into three categories: states with advanced infrastructure and fissile material, states with a research or power reactor, and states with no nuclear experience at all. In the first category are the nine states that were estimated to have "full access to the fissile material required to make a weapon" in 1977: Japan, West Germany, South Africa, Belgium, Taiwan, Italy, the Netherlands, Canada, and Sweden. The study argued that each of these states could take four remaining steps to produce a nuclear weapon within one year: converting the fissile material in their

²⁶⁵ Jacques Hymans, *ibid.*

²⁶⁶ Workshop on Nuclear Latency, Wilson Center, report edited by Joseph Pilat, October 2, 2014

possession into metallic form, designing a weapon, fabricating the weapon and its components, and preparing for and conducting a nuclear test.²⁶⁷ In fact, Japan's situation is sometimes called the "Japan option" or the "Japan model," in which the country virtually possesses the technology and capabilities to acquire nuclear weapons, without actually doing so. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, amid concerns over China's nuclearization and international discussions on the Nonproliferation Treaty, Japan commissioned a series of internal studies assessing the pros and cons of acquiring nuclear weapons. All the studies concluded that nuclearization was possible and rather easy, but would be politically divisive and would bring enormous costs, including diplomatic isolation. The so-called "1968/70 report" also underscored the importance of keeping nuclear capabilities. The document judged it "vital" that Japan achieves a sufficient degree of nuclear independence, for both military and economic security. The report, initiated by the Cabinet Research Office in 1967, recommended that Japan build a gaseous-diffusion uranium-enrichment plants to reduce dependence on uranium coming from the U.S.²⁶⁸ The most recent study that was conducted on Japan's nuclearization is from 2006, titled "On Japan's Capability for the Domestic Production of Nuclear Weapons." It was commissioned by senior government officials, and concluded that Japan has the technical expertise and means to develop a small nuclear warhead and that the country's M-V and H2-A rockets had a possible ICBM capability. However, it continued, developing such weapon would take at

²⁶⁷ Scott Sagan, "Nuclear Latency and Nuclear Proliferation" in *Forecasting Nuclear Proliferation in the 21st Century*, ed. William Potter and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, Vol. 2, 2010, p. 91

²⁶⁸ Taka Daitoku, "The Construction of a Virtual Nuclear State: Japan's Realistic Approach to an Emerging Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime, 1964-1970" in *Uncovering the Sources of Nuclear Behavior: Historical Dimensions of Nuclear Proliferation*, Georgetown University Press, forthcoming

least three to five years, cost JPY 300 billion and require hundreds of engineers and experts.²⁶⁹

All the commissioned studies²⁷⁰ therefore concluded that a nuclear option for Japan would be unthinkable from the practical point of view. However, despite the civilian nuclear program's long history of accidents and technical issues, the government seems to have maintained, for a long time, a strong attachment to its existence. In a 2014 interview, Former Minister of Internal Affairs Kunio Hatoyama revealed that his grandfather, former Prime Minister Ichirō Hatoyama, had kept a private letter from Yasuhiro Nakasone, who wrote about the “absolute necessity for Japan to have a functional nuclear energy program.”²⁷¹ Former Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda even described the issue as a matter of “life and death” in July 1977.²⁷² Because of this strong political belief, the country's nuclear energy program grew and expanded to encompass more complex features, such as the experimental fast breeder Monju, or the reprocessing facility of Rokkasho.

After a series of technical issues and accidents, Japan's government decided on December 21, 2016 to decommission the fast breeder reactor Monju. The construction of Monju started in May 1986, two weeks after the Chernobyl disaster, in Tsuruga City, Fukui prefecture, and the reactor first achieved criticality in April 1994. Monju was named after the Buddhist deity of wisdom and intellect, Manjushri; in fact, the term “monju” is used in the Japanese saying “san nin yoreba Monju no chie,” which translates into “three persons

²⁶⁹ Katsuhisa Furukawa, “Japan's Policy and Views on Nuclear Weapon: A Historical Perspective”, *Malaysian Journal of History, Politics & Strategic Studies*, vol. 37, 2010, p. 20

²⁷⁰ For a comprehensive list of nuclear studies, see Mark Fitzpatrick, *Asia's Latent Nuclear Powers: Japan, South Korea and Taiwan*, IIS, Routledge, 2016; Akira Kurosawa, *Kaku Heiki to Nichibei Kankei* (“Nuclear weapons and US-Japan alliance”), Yūshisha, 2006

²⁷¹ *Sankei Shimbun*, October 24, 2014

²⁷² Memorandum from Secretary of State Vance to President Carter, July 31, 1977, Country File (6), “Japan 5-7/77,” Box 40, Carter Library, Atlanta, Georgia

together produce the wisdom of Monju” (i.e. the closest English saying would be “two heads are better than one”). The Monju reactor has been a very controversial issue in Japan, because it was plagued by accidents since it first achieved criticality in 1994, thus showing that it was a great failure. It was only operated for 250 days since its construction and the government has been spending more than JPY 1 trillion (almost USD 9 billion) on the project. After the reactor went online for the first time in April 1994, it generated electricity in August 1995. However, on December 8 of the same year, the reactor was shut down due to a fire caused by an accident involving a sodium leak. The accident originated from a broken thermocouple inside a pipe in the secondary system, causing the sodium to leak from the opening. The thermocouple, manufactured by Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy Industries, was later found to have had a flawed design. In fact, the angular structure of the thermocouple was constantly subjected to strong vibrations caused by the sodium flow, which had caused the thermocouple to have been cracked for some time before the actual accident took place – it is in fact suspected to have been cracked for up to two years prior.²⁷³ According to the Monju Committee, established in 1996 by the Citizens’ Nuclear Information Center (CNIC), the rules governing the Monju project made it virtually impossible to check in advance for design flaws. The Committee also noted that the manual on accident management was badly made because portions of it contradicted the original safety review for licensing. Moreover, the Monju Committee’s report pointed out that because the government-run Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation (PNC) was only focused on developing the reactor and making it operate successfully, it underestimated the initial design flaws. The report also lamented the secretive decision-

²⁷³ CNIC, “Restarting Monju – Like Playing Russian Roulette,” January 10, 2010

making of the government in nuclear power development and utilization related issues. The report finally called for a complete reevaluation of the government's plutonium breeding policy, which does not seem to be an effective way to address Japan's future energy needs. The investigation process was also flawed from the beginning: the initial assessment and investigation were carried out by the owner and operator of Monju, the PNC. The STA and the Nuclear Safety Commission (NSC) also joined the investigation later, but their reports were all biased and tended to minimize the accidents and provided little to none information to the citizens. The word "accident" (*jiko*) was also omitted and replaced with "phenomenon" (*jishō*), which resonates with the phrase "some explosion-like phenomenon" used by Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano on March 12, 2011, to describe the Fukushima accident.²⁷⁴ Moreover, the PNC tried to cover up the seriousness of the accident, and falsified reports. A video footage showing the inside of the reactor was released immediately after the accident, but it was later discovered that the tape had been heavily edited using two original videos. In the edited version, the video only showed a lump of sodium in a corner of the room, while all other pipes and structures appeared to be intact. The original videos, however, showed that the pipes and ducts were seriously damaged, and a large amount of sodium was spread around the room. The STA and the Fukui prefectural government discovered the cover-up attempt, and the media subsequently reported these news, provoking a popular outburst of dissatisfaction with the government's attitude and handling of the accident. In fact, on January 23, 1996, the governors of Fukui, Fukushima, and Niigata prefectures issued a joint statement; and resolutions were adopted by more than 200 local and prefectural assemblies. Those resolutions called for the

²⁷⁴ *Nikkei Shimbun*, March 12, 2011

decommissioning of Monju or at least for a reassessment of its development plan. A team was appointed with the task of shedding light to the cover-up of the accident, but on January 12, 1996, deputy general manager of PNC's general affairs department and a member of the cover-up investigation team, Shigeo Nishimura, jumped to his death from a hotel in Tokyo. After this tragedy, the Nishimura family, and especially his widow Toshiko, has been pursuing justice for her husband and in 2004 she sued the Japan Nuclear Cycle Development Institute (successor of PNC) who allegedly forced Shigeo Nishimura to lie at a news conference about the cover-up earlier that day. In fact, during the conference, he had given false statements to the press on the date the PNC learned about the footage cover-up. Toshiko lost the case, but she joined the anti-Monju movement and stated that she "could not forgive Monju for continuing to run at the sacrifice of human life" and that if she could, she would tell her husband that "Monju was not worth dying for."²⁷⁵

Monju was restarted in May 2010, but was again shut down less than four months later on August 26 because of another accident: a 3.3-ton machine fell into the reactor vessel when being removed after a scheduled fuel replacement operation. After several failed attempts to retrieve the fallen machine, it was finally successfully removed on June 23, 2011. Yet Monju's operator at the time, the JAEA, insisted on restarting the facility. However, after another series of safety violations at Monju, the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA), newly established after the Fukushima Daiichi accident, grew frustrated with the numerous violations at the reactor, which prompted it to issue an order to stop any operations at Monju in May 2013. Over two year later on November 13, 2015, the NRA declared the JAEA unfit to run the reactor safely, and urged the government to find a new

²⁷⁵ *Asahi Shimbun*, January 12, 2017

entity that could replace the JAEA. The deadline was the end of summer 2016, but the government missed it, unable to find an effective solution. On September 21, 2016, therefore, the government announced that, after a Cabinet meeting on the issue, it decided to review the possibility of decommissioning it. The government confirmed the decommissioning plans in December that year, and in June 2017 the Fukui prefectural governor approved the plan. Governor Issei Nishikawa reportedly said at the meeting with Prime Minister Abe that the decommissioning cannot be helped, and told the press that it took so long for him to approve the plan because he wanted to clarify prefectural revitalization measures to compensate for the reactor's loss.²⁷⁶

The long-standing governmental insistence on the Monju project is somewhat puzzling, especially because it was clear that the technology proved to be a failure over and over again. Allison MacFarlane, a former chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, wrote that "These [fast-breeder reactor technologies] turn out to be very expensive technologies to build. Any countries have tried over and over. What is truly impressive is that these many governments continue to fund a demonstrably failed technology."²⁷⁷ Thomas B. Cochran, nuclear physicist and senior scientist in the Nuclear Program at the Natural Resources Defense Council, confirmed in the report "Fast Breeder Reactor Programs: History and Status" (2010) that fast reactor development programs failed in the: United States; France; United Kingdom; Germany; Japan; Italy; Soviet Union/Russia; U.S. Navy, and the Soviet Navy. Moreover, the program in India is showing no signs of success and the program in China is only at a very early stage of

²⁷⁶ *The Japan Times*, June 7, 2017

²⁷⁷ *The Japan Times*, June 2, 2017

development.²⁷⁸ In 1956 already, US Navy Admiral Hyman Rickover had commented on his experience with this type of reactors, as they are “expensive to build, complex to operate, susceptible to prolonged shutdown as a result of even minor malfunctions, and difficult and time-consuming to repair.”²⁷⁹

The issue, in fact, is the perception of the Japanese government had towards reprocessing and fast-breeding technology. The government has considered these technologies as “vital interests” for the country’s survival, arguing that the resource-poor country had the necessity to secure energy independence through the maintenance of fast-breeder reactors. In a July 1977 telegram to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, U.S. Ambassador in Japan Michael Mansfield writes that “The Japanese government views the reprocessing issue as affecting its vital interests in ways which our current economic differences, for example, do not. The claim has been made by high-level Japanese officials that the U.S. does not understand Japan’s extraordinary energy predicament, its commitment to solely peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and the discrimination against Japan vis-à-vis the Western European nations related to the U.S.-Japan Nuclear Cooperation Agreement.”²⁸⁰ Takeo Fukuda’s government, indeed, fiercely rejected President Carter’s suggestion to abandon the national reprocessing policy in 1977.

Despite plans for decommissioning the Monju reactor, the Japanese government has made it clear that it does not intend to abandon reprocessing plans. Moreover, the

²⁷⁸ International Panel on Fissile Materials, “Fast Breeder Reactor Programs: History and Status” (2010), report available at <http://fissilematerials.org/library/rf08.pdf>

²⁷⁹ Stephanie Cooke, *In Mortal Hands: A Cautionary History of the Nuclear Age*, Bloomsbury USA, 2010, p. 143

²⁸⁰ National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File (6), “Japan 5-7/77,” Box 40, Carter Library, Atlanta, Georgia; a digitalized copy of the document is available at: <http://kakujo.net/npt/MansfieldCarterFukuda1977.pdf>

government is still in denial regarding the failure of technology: during a press conference in December 2016, a METI official stated that “the press is completely wrong in assuming that the reactor had issues from the beginning and that nothing good came out of the Monju project. In fact, Monju has fulfilled most of its purposes.”²⁸¹ The ministry has in fact declared that the official policy of developing a fast breeder reactor “has not changed at all,” and has announced a plan to draw up a “strategic roadmap” for the development of those reactors by 2018.²⁸² Since the 2011 Fukushima accident, a growing number of scientists have been speaking against the necessity of the Monju reactor, also dubbed “the dream reactor” (*yume no genshiro*) because of the belief that it could have produced more energy than the amount of spent fuel it consumed.

It is extremely difficult to implement the decommissioning of Monju, because the project had created a vicious circle. The Japanese government, indeed, justifies the country’s need for keeping the reprocessing system by arguing that if the reprocessing stops, it will have consequences on the nuclear power plant system as a whole because of abundance of radioactive waste.²⁸³ The government thus justifies the necessity of the reprocessing plant Rokkasho in the same way. Part of this “dream nuclear energy” system, the construction of the Rokkasho reprocessing plant was completed in October 2013 in Aomori, one of the poorest prefectures in Japan. The facilities are owned and operated by Japan Nuclear Fuel Limited (JNFL), a private company with most of its shares owned by ten power companies. Although it has earned a poor reputation because of a series of technical glitches and

²⁸¹ NHK, Close-Up Gendai, “Ichhōen tōjita ‘Yume no Genshiro’ Monju Hairohōshin no naze,” December 12, 2016

²⁸² Masa Takubo, “Closing Japan’s Monju fast breeder reactor: the possible implications,” *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, April 2017

²⁸³ NHK, *ibid.*

twenty-three delays since 1997, the Rokkasho plant is also a facility that is very hard to eliminate. Local and prefectural governments, indeed, strongly support the Rokkasho plant because the host villages' economy is highly dependent on grants included in the Rokkasho reprocessing plant project. After the eventual failure of Monju, several scientists have started publicly warning of the dangers of keeping a reprocessing system in Japan, one of the reasons being that the Aomori site is prone to earthquakes. Moreover, in October 2017, the nuclear regulators found out that the JNFL violated legally binding safety rules by failing to conduct necessary checks for 14 years at Rokkasho. The skipping of these checks eventually resulted in over 800 liters of rainwater flowing into a building hosting a diesel generator in August 2017. The generator was an emergency device used in a crisis situation, such as the loss of external power. The regulators also discovered holes and cracks in exhaust pipes in the uranium enrichment plant in Rokkasho village.²⁸⁴ According to Tatsujirō Suzuki, former vice chairman of the Japan Atomic Energy Commission, the plutonium stockpile that rapidly grows not only sends a poor image of Japan to the rest of the world over its inability to properly control its own nuclear energy program, but it also raises suspicions on Japan's nuclearization intentions. Suzuki adds that "without presenting any clear and detailed plan on the use of plutonium, it can't be helped if neighboring countries suspect Japan of wanting to acquire nuclear weapons."²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴ Nippon TV, October 11, 2017

²⁸⁵ Author's interview with Tatsujiro Suzuki, February 22, 2018

Conclusion:

Japan's national nuclear energy program and the anti-nuclear-weapons pacifist identity of the country are linked by the idea of peace and humanity. In other words, the nuclear energy program was launched with the promise of peace, prosperity, and peaceful uses, which was relatable to the ideals of peace that the previous chapter examined. That is why the first promotional campaign in favor of nuclear energy was successful during the Nuclear Bargain of the mid-1950s. The feeling of triumph that accompanied the start of the civil nuclear program, embodied by the slogan "We have Finally Captured the Sun," was also connected to the belief that nuclear energy could turn the horrors of the war into hope for a bright future. The status of *hibakukoku* again justified and legitimized the second part of the Nuclear Bargain. Nuclear weapons and nuclear energy were therefore separated matters, but they were linked by the notion of peace: the former would destroy it, and the latter would engender it. This symbolical link, started in the mid-1950s, was consolidated over the years by the construction of a series of nationwide nuclear energy myths, which the next chapter will explore.



Nuclear stamps, 1957-1994 (source: National Diet Library, Tokyo)

CHAPTER III

Nuclear Symbols and Myths: Perpetuating the Nuclear Bargain

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Introduction:

The aggressive promotion of a clean, safe, and friendly atomic energy is not a relic of the promotional campaign of the Nuclear Bargain of the mid-1950s. In 2007 for example, the METI published an ad in the *Asahi Shimbun* titled “We will fully become the nation with the safest atomic energy in the world.” The ad, personally signed by METI Minister Akira Amari, claimed that the Japanese nuclear industry will never hide the truth, and will work towards a fully transparent system.²⁸⁶ It is clear that this blatant promotion of Japan’s nuclear program never faded since the mid-1950s, and many ads from the 1990s perfectly echo the very first ones by the *Yomiuri Shimbun*.

This chapter studies how the promotion of nuclear energy developed after the Nuclear Bargain, and analyzes the characteristics of the resulting Japan’s nuclear energy culture. The first section of the chapter will offer an explanation of the development of the so-called Atomic Village, which goes hand in hand with the notion of safety myth that became deeply engrained in the public’s



mind. The second section will point out the promotional techniques that the Atomic Village has used over the years to turn nuclear energy into a family-friendly entity. The last section will explore how the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi

Pluto-kun (Little Mr Plutonium) from *The Plutonium Tale: A Reliable Friend*, Pluto-kun (Plutonium Monogatari – Tayoreru Nakama no Pluto-kun), an informative video created by the Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation (PNC) in the spring of 1993

nuclear accident has started to expose the conditions of the nuclear workers for the very first time, and argue that the strong faith of the public has begun to falter.

²⁸⁶ Tadanori Hayakawa, *Genpatsu Utopia Nihon [Nuclear Utopia, Japan]*, Gōdō Shuppan, 2013, p.005

3.1 *A Nuclear Cult: the Atomic Village and the Safety Myth*

*“Even if the radiation sterilizes your semen,
you are always protected by the Gene God who is watching over you.”*

Dr. Yoshihisa Matsumoto, Associate Professor at the Laboratory
for Advanced Nuclear Energy, Tokyo, Japan, Asahi TV,
March 23, 2011

The nuclear energy program in Japan can be considered both a great success and a terrible failure. It is a success because in a matter of a few decades, the country has steadily worked towards the longtime goal of energy self-sufficiency and has advanced its domestic studies of nuclear technology and encouraged the study of sciences in general. Nuclear energy has been a symbol of great technological progress and modernization; an emblematic part of the Japanese postwar economic miracle. On the other hand, however, the Japanese nuclear energy program also hides planning mistakes, a lack of preparation that is apparently hard to understand for such a meticulous and technologically advanced nation. The Fukushima Daiichi accident in March 2011 exposed the severe underestimation of safety measures and upgrading systems: the methods used by TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company), the Fukushima plant owner, and NISA (Japan’s Nuclear and Industrial

Safety Agency) to assess the risks of tsunamis fell well behind international standards.²⁸⁷

However, there is also an important element that should be added to the technical shortcomings of the Japanese nuclear energy program. When the prefectures first tried to organize emergency evacuation drills in areas with nuclear power plants, the residents were puzzled, asking why such drills would be necessary, since accidents would never happen in Japan. Initial popular resistance was so strong that evacuation drills were eventually carried out with mock residents.²⁸⁸ This behavior implies that the so-called *anzen shinwa* (“safety myth”) was indeed very well engrained in the public’s minds. After Fukushima, indeed, several newspaper articles started mentioning the phrase *anzen shinwa*, and revealed how flawed that belief of nuclear perfection was.

Although the media started to expose the *anzen shinwa* in 2011, some in the government also seem to blame the media of fabricating it in the first place. As Yoshinori Ihara claims, “the media created this myth. I, the scientists, and all my colleagues in the government knew of the dangers that nuclear power plants bring – we knew all about them right from the beginning. The media simply ignored and covered them.”²⁸⁹ However, a more in-depth study reveals that the origins and development of the myth are more complex than that. Political scientist Kazuto Suzuki writes in his “Analysis of historical and structural factors” section of the Independent Investigation Commission Report on the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Accident (March 2012) that the behavior and reactions of the Fukushima people during the nuclear crisis showed how much of an impact the *anzen*

²⁸⁷ James M. Acton and Mark Hibbs, “Why Fukushima was preventable,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Nuclear Policy, March 2012

²⁸⁸ *Asahi Shimbun*, “Anzen Shinwa” no hate – Fukushima Daiichi Genpatsu Jiko” [The end of the ‘Safety Myth’ – the Fukushima Daiichi accident], March 16, 2011

²⁸⁹ Author’s interview with Yoshinori Ihara, May 27, 2016

shinwa had. In particular, Suzuki highlights not only the role of the people of the so-called Atomic Village (*Genshiryoku Mura* 原子力ムラ) that promoted and perpetuated the myth, but also the role of the population as a whole, where the myth was well-embedded.²⁹⁰

Before tackling the issue of the “safety myth,” however, the phrase “Atomic Village” requires further explanation. The expression, born in the 1990s, describes the intricate web of connections between the nuclear industry and the government officials in Japan. The term has a negative connotation and evokes a network of opacity and conflicting interests that promotes a determined agenda: pushing forward the project of enhancing nuclear power despite being aware of flawed, old, or faulty mechanisms and of new data and studies on tsunamis. The term “village” refers to the close-mindedness of this network, similar to the stifling atmosphere of a small village, where politicians, nuclear industry officials, scientists, scholars, and bureaucrats form a compact clique where exchanges of political favors, construction projects, promotions, positions of power take place. Anyone who shows any skepticism in their view is cut out of the circle and is bound to miss out on these favorable positions.

The phrase *Genshiryoku Mura* was first used by Tetsunari Iida, former nuclear engineer and current director of the Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies. In his essay “The People of the Atomic Village – Carelessly Running Over Everything and Everyone” appeared in the February 1997 issue of the magazine *Ronza*, Iida first uses the phrase to describe the long history of power abuse and dysfunctionality by this very elitist clique. The phrase has since been used widely to designate the impenetrability of the atomic energy

²⁹⁰ Kazuto Suzuki, *Fukushima Genpatsu Dokuritsu Kenshō Inkaï Chōsa, Kenshō Hōkoku-sho* [Report of the Independent Investigation Commission on the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant], Discover Twenty-One, 2012

world in Japan. Former NHK Journalist Gorō Koide refers to the Atomic Village as the “Atomic Pentagon,” which includes “politicians, bureaucrats, industry, academia, and the media,” and is held up by a strong structure based on “cash, positions, favors.”²⁹¹

Speaking at the fifth roundtable for nuclear policy in January 1999, Tetsunari Iida further developed his explanation of the management of nuclear power in Japan. The author starts with an interesting disclaimer: in order to understand the Atomic Village, it would be pointless to pay attention to their *tatemae* (façade) aspect; the *honne* (real intention) side of the story should be the one to focus on. The problem however, according to Iida, is that those two sides have too much distance between each other, the *tatemae* creating an impenetrable barrier of words that drown in confusion any outsider’s requests for *honne*. The author cites the Monju accident and the Kobe earthquake in 1995 as examples where the authorities have shut the public down with a flood of *tatemae* discourse.²⁹² Iida’s reflection resonates with Chie Nakane’s analysis of verticality of Japanese society, and uses the concepts of 公 (ōyake - public) and 私 (watakushi - private) to explore the relationship that the Japanese have with the notion of belonging to a group. The *watakushi* is associated with the concept of *ie* or *uchi*, which goes beyond the literal translation “house, home” and extends to the meaning of “family system, clan,” i.e. the community to which one belongs.²⁹³ As Nakane states, the concept of *ie* has been the subject of lengthy disputes among Japanese legal scholars and sociologists. Although the general consensus is that the

²⁹¹ Mitsutoshi Hayakawa, “Fukushima Genpatsu Jiko to Sono Kyōkun – Dai Nikai Fukushima Genpatsu Jiko to Anzen Shinwa, Genshiryoku Mura” (The Fukushima Nuclear Accident and its Lesson – The second Fukushima Nuclear Accident and the Safety Myth.’ Casa Letter No. 81, August 2013

²⁹² Tetsunari Iida, Bōsō suru Genshiryoku Mura no Hitobito [The People of the Atomic Village – Carelessly Running Over Everything and Everyone], February 1997, Asahi Shimbun, *Ronza*; Tetsunari Iida, “Genshiryoku no Un’ei Taisei no Arikata ni tsuite,” [Administration and Management of Nuclear Power], presentation at the Fifth Roundtable for Nuclear Policy, January 21, 1999

²⁹³ Chie Nakane, *Japanese Society*, Penguin Books, 1970, pp. 3-4; Tetsunari Iida, 1997, 1999

institution of *ie* is a feudal residue and thus slowly dying since the end of World War II, Nakane notes that some important parts of Japanese society are still very much under the influence of this structure: “the *ie* is a social group constructed on the basis of an established frame of residence and often of management organization. What is important here is that the human relationships within this household group are thought of as more important than all other human relationships.”²⁹⁴ That is why traditionally, in Japanese society, relations by blood are not as important or strong as alliances. To illustrate this idea with an example: a wife and a daughter-in-law, who do not share the same blood but do share the same *ie*, have a tighter bond than a woman with her sisters or daughters, who will eventually leave the original family to marry into a different *ie*. Equally, as Nakane observes, the term *kaisha* has a much deeper connotation than its literal and flat translation of “firm, company, enterprise.” *Kaisha* is “my” or “our” company, the community to which one belongs primarily and which is paramount in one’s life.²⁹⁵ Therefore, one’s membership to an institution is the most important identity for a member of Japanese society, and the safest way to ensure survival within the society. Understanding this mechanism makes the structure and purpose of the Atomic Village clearer, and the origins and motivations at the base of the network are also easier to comprehend. The *watakushi*, further argues Iida, the “private,” is something that should be concealed as opposed to *ōyake*, the “public,” which constitutes the outside of any group. There are, therefore, *ōyake* spaces at any level.

Another very striking characteristic of Iida’s analysis is the religious metaphors used to describe the Village. The engineer refers to the Atomic Energy Commission founded in 1956 as an opaque, biased system that lacks an accountability mechanism and

²⁹⁴ Chie Nakane, *ibid.*, p. 5

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3

where the bureaucrats “wear an invisibility cloak.” These traits make the Commission a non-democratic system where the so-called “elite,” i.e. bureaucrats, scientists, scholars, and other influential figures maintain an impartial façade, but their actions are actually closer to animism and shamanism. The political legitimacy of this institution therefore comes from the combination of shamanic behavior, active policy-making, all sorts of feedback from scholars and scientists, and continuous administrative work by the bureaucrats. Moreover, the public hearings that are organized to inform the public and listen to different opinions before starting the construction of a local nuclear power plant have similarities to a ritual, a ceremony that only serves the purpose of preserving the *tatemaie*. Extracts of the transcripts of these hearings, in fact, clearly show how speakers mostly ignore the questions by the public, change topics when answering, or respond with very vague, generic non-answers. An interesting pattern in these ceremonies is the dodging of all questions and comments related to nuclear safety. Economic pundit Katsuto Uchibashi labels these public hearings “Imperial Aid Association Hearings,” because of their pointlessness and only objective to feign interest in the public’s point of view that remind the ones held by the Imperial organization (1940-1945).²⁹⁶ Moreover, the starting point of these public sessions is biased: of the 13 hearings held up until the Fukushima disaster in 2011, not one had ever had a scholar representing the skeptics of the nuclear power plant project, which also shows that the nature of these hearings were unilateral and purely formal.

Tetsunari Iida’s analysis brings up another element that explains the character of the Atomic Village: fetishism. Japanese society tends to give more importance to

²⁹⁶ Katsuto Uchibashi, *Nihon no Genpatsu, Doko de Machigaetanoka* [Japan’s nuclear power plants – what went wrong?], Asahi Shimbun Shuppan, April 2011, p. 192

tangibility: things that can be seen, touched, counted; such as large structures or money. This in turn makes intangible things, such as ideas and values that are fundamental for a modern democracy, irrelevant and easy to ignore.²⁹⁷ This mechanism, therefore, makes it easier for the government to be indifferent to the public's anxiety over radiation risk or to atomic bomb related illnesses.²⁹⁸ The former engineer adds that a fatalistic interpretation of life also helps maintain the rigid rules that comes with keeping up the *tatema*. Iida further describes the organization of the Atomic Village as a pathological one, and explains that the Village is composed by two sub-villages: the METI Village and the STA Village. The AEC, reporting to the Prime Minister, should dictate nuclear policy as a whole. However, because the STA is responsible for the actual administration and implementation of the policy, the AEC acts as a shaman to the STA Village, because the Chairman of the AEC is also the Director of STA. On the other side, the METI has created the Nuclear Policy Subcommittee which, Iida argues, acts as a shaman towards the METI itself.²⁹⁹

With the ceremonies and rituals, the rigid hierarchy, a certain level of fetishism, the Atomic Village has distinct traits of a religious group. This explanation makes it now easier to connect to this hermetic group the notion of “myth,” and in particular of “safety myth” to the story of Japan's nuclear industry. The “safety myth” is indeed fundamental to understand the surprise of Fukushima, and is the ring that connects the public's and the elites' perception of nuclear energy in the pre-3.11 era. As mentioned earlier, bureaucrats such as Ihara are convinced that the myth was created by the media and reinforced by the public. At the same time, however, many among the public accuse the government, and

²⁹⁷ Tetsunari Iida, 1999

²⁹⁸ Sayuri Romei, “Six Years After the Fukushima Disaster, Its Victims are Still Suffering,” *The Washington Post*, March 10, 2017

²⁹⁹ Tetsunari Iida, 1999

especially the Atomic Village for the creation and imposition of this myth.³⁰⁰ As Kazuto Suzuki observes, it is reasonable to think that the myth was in fact caught in a vicious circle then reinforced by both sides, thus spreading widely across the country and becoming a pervasive element of the Japanese nuclear realm.³⁰¹ Indeed, Japan's nuclear production had come to a point of no return. Being the producer of nuclear energy and having made the nuclear industry a very thriving business, the Atomic Village is in a position where revealing the risks of nuclear energy would undermine its own legitimacy, or even its own existence. Repeating the phrase "it is safe" ("anzen desu"), with all sorts of variations, had in fact become a mantra for many members of the Atomic Village. Even after a scandal broke out on falsified data and records by electricity companies in 2007, former Minister of the METI announced that Japan's first nuclear priority is safety, more specifically "being the best nation in the world for nuclear safety."³⁰²

Suzuki's impression that the myth was reinforced by the public focuses also on the role of the emergence of the first anti-nuclear energy movements in the 1970s. The clash between the anti-nuclear voices and the pro-nuclear ones had the effect of stiffening and further polarizing the two camps, giving no choice to the pro-nuclear group but to reinforce the *anzen shinwa*.³⁰³ This is certainly true, but a significant detail should be added to this argument. When these popular movements first emerged in the 1970s, and up until the Fukushima disaster in 2011, they were far from being one nationwide organized anti-nuclear movement. In fact, those could not even be qualified as "anti-nuclear movements,"

³⁰⁰ Mitsutoshi Hayakawa, "Fukushima Genpatsu Jiko to Sono Kyōkun – Dai Nikai Fukushima Genpatsu Jiko to Anzen Shinwa, Genshiryoku Mura" (The Fukushima Nuclear Accident and its Lesson – The second Fukushima Nuclear Accident and the Safety Myth.' Casa Letter No. 81, August 2013

³⁰¹ Kazuto Suzuki, *ibid.*

³⁰² *Asahi Shimbun*, March 29, 2007

³⁰³ Kazuto Suzuki, *ibid.*

because each group's purpose was to fight the construction of that specific nuclear power plant. As Yūko Hirabayashi observes, the pre-3.11 opposition was always limited to the local level, and the people never opposed "nuclear energy" or "radiation," but rather an unknown ambitious project that fell from the sky onto their own town.³⁰⁴ The reasons of their opposition were indeed varied and most opponents felt that the large construction project would disrupt their everyday lives.

Every Monday since 1982, the majority of the 500 residents of Iwaishima, a tiny island in Yamaguchi prefecture, peacefully protests the government's plan to build the Kaminoseki nuclear power plant. Most residents of the island are elderly fishermen. Their story was the subject of the documentary *Holy Island* (2010) by Aya Hanabusa, who tells the story of the over 30-year-long struggle that the residents of the sleepy island are carrying out against the power plant project that their district accepted from the government and the Chugoku Electric Power Company in 1982. Those residents believe that a nuclear plant on their island would compromise their fishing business by polluting the water irreversibly. One of them cries out: "We are blessed to have this sea, those mountains – it was a gift from our ancestors. How could we live without them?" The documentary, indeed, brings out the peaceful harmony in which the inhabitants of the island live alongside Nature. The role that Nature has had on their lives is irreplaceable: the name of the island derives in fact from the shamans that once lived on the island and believed they could speak to the divinities of Nature, thus forever protecting the island and its natural prosperity. The residents are still very attached to this legend and consider protecting Nature as their

³⁰⁴ Yūko Hirabayashi, "Genpatsu Okotowari – Chiten to Han-genpatsu Undō," [No to Nuclear Power – Anti-Nuclear Movements and local communities], Ōhara Shakai Mondai Kenkyūsho Zasshi, Hōsei University, No. 661, November 2013, p. 47

primary goal. The English version of the title of Hanabusa's work is clever because it conveys a sacred, divine aspect while still preserving the phonetic similarity to Hōri no Shima, the original title and another way of reading the characters for Iwaishima (祝島).

Many of the residents of the island feel sorry that such a project causes so much tension and rifts within the community, splitting it in two factions, thus disrupting the peace of their lives and bringing awkwardness to the traditional ceremonies of the island.³⁰⁵ Proponents of the nuclear plant claim that the plant will offer the areas of Iwaishima and Kaminoseki great industrial and commercial development, bringing in a large quantity of jobs and a demographical renewal. "Our town's very survival is at stake," states Tadanori Koizumi, an executive director of a pro-nuclear civic group. For the opponents of the plant, however, this lack of development is in fact the area's major asset, which also preserves numerous threatened species.³⁰⁶

The Iwaishima example shows that the motivations in opposing nuclear power have mainly been personal and tied to the local community. This is also the case for the town of Kubokawa, in Shikoku Island, for instance, whose residents developed a movement strictly limited to their own town, in order to force the mayor to resign and indict a referendum. They stated in the early 1980s: "our fighting scene is restricted to the town of Kubokawa, and we do not care at all about what the MITI (currently METI) or even the Shikoku Nuclear Power Company are doing. (...). Our community is the one affected by this project, and it would be a great economic burden for us to expand the protest beyond our town. That would mean creating fractures in our movement, and we cannot afford to lose our

³⁰⁵ *Hōri no Shima (Holy Island)*, Aya Hanabusa, PolePoletimes, Tokyo, 2010; author's conversation with Aya Hanabusa, July 2012

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*; *This Week in Asia*, April 2018

strength. (...) The most important thing in our movement is to stay in one place and fight as if in a sumo match. Besides, it would not benefit us at all to protest against nuclear power as a whole.”³⁰⁷

Although it seems like the anti-nuclear movements started to become more vocal at that time (AEC Commissioner Yūji Osada commented that “1980 was a difficult year”),³⁰⁸ all the protests were extremely localized and the communities were not coordinated with one another.

Confusingly enough, these local communities are also sometimes called “*Genshiryoku mura*” (Nuclear Villages). Through his post-3.11 book, Hiroshi Kainuma intends to highlight “how loved the nuclear plants have been by the local communities.”³⁰⁹ In fact, the Fukushima disaster also exposed for the first time the mechanisms that made acceptance of a nuclear power plant easier for these Nuclear Villages. As Social Democratic Party (SDP) politician and lawyer Mizuho Fukushima states, “if a nuclear power plant is built, the financial funding from the government will be abundant and, as a politician, elections will go smoothly. It was revealed that the LDP was receiving donations addressed to specific people inside the party from TEPCO managers. Besides, the Democratic Party too was being supported by the workers of the Denryoku Sōren (the Federation of Electric Power Related Industry Worker’s Unions of Japan). That is why the nuclear power plants have been overprotected by the state for more than 60 years.”³¹⁰

The Iwaishima residents who are in favor of a nuclear plant on their island indeed

³⁰⁷ Yūko Hirobayashi, *ibid.*

³⁰⁸ *The Christian Science Monitor*, “Japan Reaches a Turning Point in Advancement of Nuclear Power,” March 13, 1981

³⁰⁹ Hiroshi Kainuma, *Chihō no Ronri: Fukushima kara Kangaeru Nihon no Mirai* [The Logic of the countryside: Thinking about Japan’s Future starting from Fukushima], Seidosha, 2012

³¹⁰ *Gendai Business*, “Money, Money, Money: the strong thread that bonds politicians, scholars, and the media,” May 16, 2011

argue that the land would largely benefit from it, because the project also includes the construction of “nice pools, golf courses, and other recreational facilities,”³¹¹ and brings about a great number of jobs. Because of this interest, those residents fully support the safety myth by linking it to the belief that a nuclear power plant is a necessary item on their land, which echoes Suzuki’s view that the *anzen shinwa* is also reinforced by the residents themselves. Former governor (1988-2006) of Fukushima prefecture Eisaku Satō (not to be confused with homonymous former Prime Minister), once an enthusiastic supporter of nuclear power, also commented on the matter: “this is the logic of Japan’s nuclear energy policy: if you think that nuclear power is vital and indispensable, then you must inevitably believe that it is safe. And that is the message you have to spread.”³¹²

The pervasive nature of this myth has thus created another “taboo” in Japan’s relationship with the nuclear world: the taboo of risks of accidents of the nuclear power plants. When Fukushima happened, most experts and figures in the Atomic Village commented that they were completely in shock that such an accident could happen. Some stated that they had predicted earthquakes, but not the risk of tsunamis.³¹³ The myth of safety, in fact, distorted their perception, which made them take many things for granted, or too lightly.

This effect of the *anzen shinwa* is shown in the way the Atomic Village dealt with the concept of “defense in depth” used for nuclear safety. As described in the Independent

³¹¹ *Hōri no Shima (Holy Island)*, Aya Hanabusa, PolePoletimes, Tokyo, 2010; author’s conversation with Aya Hanabusa, July 2012; author’s conversation with Aya Hanabusa, July 2012

³¹² Eisaku Satō, Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Japan (press conference), April 21, 2011

³¹³ Noboru Nishiyama and Takatoshi Imada, *Zerorisk Gensō to Anzen Shinwa no Yuragi – Higashi Nihon Daishinsai to Fukushima Genshiryoku Hatsudensho Jiko wo tsūjita Nihonjin no Risk Ishiki no Henka;*” (The Fantasy of Zero Risk and the Crumbling of the Safety Myth – A Change in the Japanese people’s Perception of Risk through the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Fukushima Nuclear Accident), International Environment and Economy Institute, IEI, No. 34, September 2012

Investigation Commission report (2012), Japanese experts had prepared for the first three levels of the defense in depth, but were not fully ready for levels 4 and 5.

The following are the levels of defense in depth established by the IAEA:

1. Prevention of abnormal operation failures
2. Control of abnormal operation and detection failures
3. Control of accidents within the design basis
4. Control of accident beyond design basis
5. Offsite emergency response

It became clear after the 2011 accident that Japan's nuclear energy program was well-prepared for levels 1, 2, and 3, but was unprepared for levels 4 and 5. As Dr. Akira Ōmoto explains, there was not enough consideration to prepare for events beyond design basis. He also points out that there was poor, if at all, coordination between different disciplines in studying for safety measures: “[p]lant engineers could have asked civil engineers questions on these points. Civil engineers also could have listened more carefully to a wide variety of views including alternative views by soliciting public comments.”³¹⁴

This behavior highlights the culture prevailing in the Atomic Village and the illusion of Japan's exceptionalism stemming from the myth of safety. Ōmoto further argues that there is also a possibility that complacency played a role in the lack of preparedness. The author laments the lack of “reality drills” that would emulate a realistic accident scenario, as well as the lack of concern over the measures that the United States had taken

³¹⁴ Akira Omoto, “Where Was the Weakness in Application of Defense-in-Depth Concept and Why?” in Ahn J., Carson C., Jensen M., Juraku K., Nagasaki S., Tanaka S. (eds) *Reflections on the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Accident*, December 2014

after the terroristic attack on September 11, 2001. This absence of concern, adds Ōmoto, “may suggest assumptions in the mind of operators that accidents cannot happen here.”³¹⁵ In fact, on an international level, the Fukushima accident was connected to the 9.11 terrorist attack, and raised a debate over the link between safety and security. After the 2001 attack, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) adopted the requirement to install provisions and procedures to maintain safety functions under a hypothetical attack.³¹⁶ The NISA, the METI organization in charge of nuclear safety regulation, had been briefed by the U.S. NRC about these new requirements. However, no warning or information was given to Japanese operators by NISA.³¹⁷ One of the reasons why the NISA did not implement those U.S. measures was because it did not want “the residents to be anxious, thus creating misunderstandings.”³¹⁸ This once again contributed to the spreading and reinforcing of the safety myth while, at the same time, weakening the actual implementation of safety measures in case of an accident.

³¹⁵ Akira Omoto, *ibid.*, p. 143

³¹⁶ U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (25 Feb 2002) Order for interim safeguard and security compensatory measures. EA-02-026. U. S. NRC, Washington DC. Available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/enforcement/security/2002/security-order-2-25-02.pdf>

³¹⁷ Akira Omoto, *ibid.*, p. 143; Kazuto Suzuki, *ibid.*, *Asahi Shimbun*, “Prometheus no Wana,” [Prometheus’ Trap], August 2013

³¹⁸ Kazuto Suzuki, *ibid.*

3.2 *Making Nuclear Energy Lovable and Friendly*

In 1984, in the earthquake-prone Aomori prefecture in the northernmost part of the island of Honshu, the Higashidori fishermen's union snubbed representatives of Tokyo Electric and Tohoku Electric, the two power companies planning to build nuclear reactors on the site. The two companies came back with a new plan: they jointly opened a local "preparatory office" with 35 full-time employees, whose only job was to "gain the understanding" of the fishermen. "I would go to a friend's house and there would be guys from the power companies," Higashida, a fisherman, recounts. Villagers would be taken out to expensive meals. "Guys who used to be vocal in opposing the plants suddenly became quiet," Higashida notes. "If someone asks the power company for help in getting their son a job, they would help out. People feel grateful. That is how opposition crumbles."³¹⁹ In fact, in the summer of 1992, during the final vote, two-thirds of the fishermen voted in favor of the nuclear plants. One of the strongest weapons of the Atomic Village, indeed, has been its charm offensive both at the local and national levels.

The Agency for Natural Resources and Energy (ANRE), the organization within the METI responsible for energy policy-making, started publishing in 1990 the magazine *Dreamer: Chūgakusei no tame no Energy Jōhōshi* (Dreamer: an informative magazine for middle school children). On July 31, 1964 the Cabinet established the Nuclear Energy Day

³¹⁹ *LA Times*, March 14, 1993; Author's interview with Tetsuji Imanaka, April 15, 2016;

(Genshiryoku no Hi) in order to celebrate the accomplishments of Japanese nuclear energy since 1956. October 26 was chosen as the date, because it is the anniversary of Japan's entry to the IAEA (1956), and also the day Japan's first nuclear reactor, the Tōkaimura reactor in Ibaraki Prefecture, successfully produced electricity (1963). The magazine *Dreamer* organized an annual nationwide illustration and poster contest for young readers (examples on p. 167) for Nuclear Energy Day, and the rules instructed the participants to always include a motto or a slogan pertaining to nuclear energy. The children's drawings showcased in the issues of the magazine highlight a few recurring themes: Japan's (or the planet's) bright future created by nuclear energy; a gentle, smiling, and friendly nuclear energy that protects the Earth from global warming; the impressive quantity of nuclear power plants in Japan; a hard-working nuclear energy that helps everyone lead a good life; a safe and eco-friendly nuclear energy that makes the earth thrive. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), which combines the former STA and Ministry of Education, unsurprisingly represents an important player in the construction of Japan's nuclear culture up until 2011. In coordination with the METI, the MEXT also launched a series of complementary textbooks for elementary and middle schoolchildren. These textbooks and initiatives were usually welcomed or simply taken for granted by the public until the Fukushima accident. After the accident, in April 2011, some parents noticed discrepancies in their children's school textbooks, and contacted the press. The textbooks in question were *Waku-waku Land* (Happy Excitement-land) for elementary schoolchildren, and *Challenge! The Nuclear Energy World*, crafted for middle schoolchildren. The public started contesting the affirmation written in the books that "nuclear power plants are completely resistant to both earthquakes and tsunamis," and that

“the radiation cannot possibly escape from the facilities because of their strong protection and impenetrability.” On April 15, then Minister of MEXT Yoshiaki Takaki (SDP) organized a press conference and stated that there are, in fact, some discrepancies between the affirmations in the books and reality, thus promising a revision of those textbooks.³²⁰

Another way the Atomic Village has contributed to creating and reinforcing the nation’s nuclear culture is through the extensive use of mascots. Japan is well-known for using endearing mascots and characters for most businesses, and nuclear energy is no exception. The mascots created to promote a local attraction or business are called “yuru-kyara,” a term coined by illustrator and cultural critic Jun Miura in the early 2000s. The term, combining the word “yurui” (loose, lovable, gentle), with “kyara/chara,” the abbreviation for the English word “character,” indicates the friendliness and light-heartedness of the mascot. Most nuclear power plants and energy companies have their own *yuru-kyara* that are made into all sorts of gadgets and to make it especially friendly to young children.

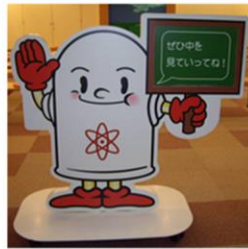
³²⁰ *Sports Nippon, Mainichi Shimbun*, April 15, 2011

Here are some examples:

Yuyu, yuru-chara of Hamaoka nuclear power plant (npp), Shizuoka Pref.:



Tomarin, yuru-chara of Tomari npp, Hokkaido:



Tsukattermo-TsuKaeru-kun,
Rokkasho Reprocessing plant, Aomori Pref.

Rikki, yuru-chara of Shimane npp, Shimane Pref.:



Mirai-kun and his family,
Kyushu Electric Power Company:



Akari-chan and Genta-kun, Onagawa npp,
Miyagi Pref.:



The use of *yuru-chara* for PR purposes has been effective in transforming nuclear energy into a lovable, friendly character that is also helpful and necessary in order to lead a good and peaceful life. Some characters are named after the geographical place, but others require an explanation. The name of the Rokkasho reprocessing plant *yuru-chara*, Tsukattermo-tsuKaeru-kun is a pun that combines the phrase “you can re-use it after you use it” (tsukattermo tsukaeru) with “frog” (kaeru). Additionally, Kyushu Electric Power Company’s mascot name, Mirai-kun means “Little Mr. Future.” Genta-kun from Onagawa npp is linked to “nuclear power” (*genshiryoku*) and Akari-chan means “Little Miss Light.”

The creation of the “Plutonium Tale” is also an good example of publicity in favor of the safety myth. *The Plutonium Tale: A Reliable Friend, Pluto-kun (Plutonium Monogatari – Tayoreru Nakama no Pluto-kun)* is an informative video made by the PNC in the spring of 1993. The 11-minute video was made into 250 copies and distributed in all the visitor centers of the nuclear power plants across the country, and streamed in these centers and public places in the Nuclear Villages. Pluto-kun is an endearing little creature with a child’s voice that guides the viewer and begs them not to be afraid of him. He first appears in a ghost costume, then takes it off and tells the audience that “despite some think I am bad and scary, I am actually good.” He acknowledges that in the past, during the war, he was used for destruction, but he raises his arms and goes on to say that he “actually hates war and loves working in order to bring peace.” Throughout the animation, Pluto-kun debunks the myths and common beliefs, calling them misunderstandings. According to the character, for example, a nuclear bomb is nearly impossible to make from the plutonium in the Japanese nuclear power plants, because its purity is lower. Moreover, the level of surveillance and protection of the plant and the plutonium is constant and extremely high, therefore no one could ever dream of stealing the



plutonium from a nuclear power plant. Pluto-kun also denies that plutonium is poisonous and can cause cancer: he concedes that if one breathes it, or absorbs it through a wound, it might be difficult to expel it from the system. However, if it is drunk it will not cause any

harm at all, the character says, and proceeds to shake hands with a boy gulping down plutonium-tainted water. This statement will be echoed by Prof. Hirotada Ōhashi of Tokyo University in December 2005 during an open forum in Saga prefecture: “drinking plutonium is completely fine and safe. It will be flushed out of the system right away.”³²¹ In early 1994 the *Mainichi Shimbun* reported some shocked reactions and criticism of the *Plutonium Tale* by local groups opposing their nuclear power plant project,³²² and in 1999 the video gradually disappeared and was revised for a new version.³²³ However, in April 2011, following the Fukushima accident, a Twitter account named Plutokun_bot appeared and has quickly gathered thousands of followers. It is hard to tell if it is a black humor account, however, or a nuclear PR one, because the slogans it publishes are eerily similar to the pro-nuclear energy campaign. T-shirts are also starting to be sold online.³²⁴

The Atomic Village has, indeed, used the manga industry as an important tool for the pro-nuclear information campaign. Illustrator Jun Miura disclosed on a live TV program in April 2011 that TEPCO commissioned him 4 vignettes, but he turned down the job. The host commented that rumor has it that TEPCO always pays around JPY 5 million (USD 46,500) per vignette, and the artist responded that they actually offered much more than that. He then observed that “using innocuous-looking mascots (*yura-chara*) like Plutokun can in fact cause important damages to society,” and argued that the people often remain unaccountable by hiding behind those characters.³²⁵

³²¹ The footage of the statement and the heated discussion with colleague prof. Hiroaki Koide of Kyoto University is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6byKIUiuBcg>

³²² *Mainichi Shimbun*, “Ikisugita anzen PR – the residents react against the PNC’s PR video,” January 1, 1994

³²³ *Shimbun Akahata*, November 8, 1999

³²⁴ *RocketNews24*, April 2011

³²⁵ *Niconico News*, April 28, 2011

Nuclear Energy Drawing Contest, October 2010, Dreamer: Chūgakusei no tame no Energy Jōhōshi



"Nuclear energy is great! 1/3 of our electricity comes from nuclear energy"



"Nuclear power plants: they're SO good for the environment!!"



"Nuclear energy is carrying our future"



"Nuclear energy is clean and protects us from global warming"



"Reducing CO2, taking care of Earth. Nuclear Energy is so friendly!"



"We are all smiling thanks to Nuclear Energy"



"Little Miss Uranium is working so hard in the nuclear power plants."



"Japan is the third country in the world for nuclear power plants!! Impressive!"



"Nuclear energy... ..so gentle to the Earth!"



"Japan has 53 nuclear power plants!"



"Nuclear Energy, so clean"



"Remember!! Nuclear Energy: so important for the Earth!!!"

3.3 *Crumbling (?) Nuclear Glamour*

By abruptly awakening the public of the possibility of a nuclear accident, the 3.11 Fukushima nuclear disaster had the effect of opening not only a debate on the future of Japan's energy policy, but also a reflection on what had been done up to that point without almost anyone noticing. The numbers are revealing: according to a government survey from March 1969, 65.3% of the 3,000 respondents answered "YES" to the question "are you favorable to the active promotion and pursuit of nuclear energy in Japan?" whereas only 4.6% answered "NO". The rest was split between "No opinion" and "I do not know."³²⁶ The NHK presented a similar survey in April 2011, only one month after the Fukushima accident, and the respondents in favor of keeping online all existing nuclear power plants represented 42%, whereas the ones in favor of a reduction represented 32%. While the poll shows a split into two similar parts, it is telling that the other answers, "Japan should increase the number of nuclear plants" and "Japan should abolish all nuclear plants" are still very low: 7% and 12% respectively.³²⁷ These numbers shift already in July 2011, showing that 65% of the survey respondents are in favor of halting the nuclear power plants and wish for a change in energy policy: 2% were in favor of increasing the number of

³²⁶ "Opinion poll study on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy," study by the Cabinet, March 1969: <http://survey.gov-online.go.jp/s43/S44-03-43-21.html>

³²⁷ NHK, April 18, 2011

nuclear plants, 29% were happy with the current number, 46% stated their wish to see them reduced, and 19% responded in favor of total abolition of the nuclear power plants.³²⁸ According to Atsuko Kitada's research on the continuous public opinion polls on nuclear power for 30 years, indeed, the negative opinions towards nuclear power generation (abolition or reduction) used to be quite steady, oscillating between 20% and 30%, with slight increases around the Chernobyl crisis in April 1986. The same data rose to 70% from four to six months after the Fukushima accident in 2011, amid the shock of the disaster and talks about renewable energy. Kitada's findings also show that even after the 3.11 event, 60% considered nuclear power generation as "inevitable," but many opposed the construction of new nuclear power facilities, and anxiety and distrust toward nuclear power also increased remarkably.³²⁹ The Fukushima accident had brutally introduced the idea, in the public's minds, that accidents can actually happen, contrary to what the *anzen shinwa* had been implying.

Fukushima has brought about another significant change: the media exposure of the nuclear workers' world. The very first time the inside of a nuclear power plant was pictured and shown was in 1977, when photographer Kenji Higuchi published two images of nuclear workers toiling inside a reactor at the Tsuruga nuclear power plant, in Fukui prefecture. Higuchi kept documenting for decades the work in the nation's nuclear plants and published several books on the struggles of radiation victims. Interviewed by the Kansai TV in May 2011, the photographer recounts that he first became interested in

³²⁸ *Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 5, 2011

³²⁹ Atsuko Kitada, "Keizoku Chōsa de miru genshiryoku hatsuden ni taisuru seron – kako 30 nen to Fukushima Daiichi Genshiryoku Hatsudensho jiko go no henka" [Public Opinion on Nuclear Power Generation Measured in Continuous Polls – Changes After Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Accident over the Past 30 Years], *Nihon Genshiryoku Gakkai Wabun Ronbun-shi*, Vol. 12, No. 3, p 177-196, 2013

nuclear power plants when talking to nuclear worker Shigeru Satō, and elderly man who worked for TEPCO at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant who eventually died of cancer: “Satō-san told me how they would wear an alien-like outfit and a protective mask every day at work, which felt so hot and uncomfortable to the point that they would take it off at some point in order to get through their work day. He told me that whenever the alarm



Tsuruga nuclear reactor, Fukui pref., 1977 (c) Kenji Higuchi

would go off their radiation meter, they would just slam it on the ground because it was too loud and it would disturb their work. After hearing these things, I got so curious about these nuclear plants.”³³⁰ Kenji Higuchi’s



Beach goers and the Mihama Nuclear Power Plant, Mihama, Fukui Pref., 2004 © Kenji Higuchi

nuclear documentation work was the subject of a 1995 documentary called *Nuclear Ginza* by British filmmaker Nicholas Röhrl, which was broadcast on Channel 4 in Great Britain. Higuchi’s work was recognized abroad; he received an award at the UN Global Environment Photography Contest in 1974 and the Nuclear-Free World Award in 2001.

³³⁰ Kenji Higuchi, “Hibaku suru rōdōsha-tachi: shitauke, hiyatoi ga sasaeru genpatsu no jittai” [The workers as victims of radiation: subcontractors and day laborers supporting the reality of the nuclear power plants], May 23, 2011, KTV

However, his work was never really acknowledged in Japan until the Fukushima accident, after which the media's attention finally started to grow. His first Japanese award came in December 2011: the Peace and Cooperation Journalism Prize, and after 3.11, he was asked to give lectures, seminars, and presentations in numerous institutions across the country; his book sales also went up. As Higuchi himself comments, up until 2011, "I was the least popular photographer in Japan," which echoes the title of his 1983 book *Becoming an Unpopular Photographer* where he studies the pollution caused by the petrochemical plants in Yokkaichi City in addition to the nuclear issue.³³¹ In the documentary *Nuclear Ginza*, the photographer explores the underground of the Japanese nuclear workers and recounts his surprise as he learned that the people working in the nuclear plants were farmers, fishermen, and laborers picked up on the streets from the slums of Osaka and Tokyo. While the nuclear industry was considered by the public a world for the few selected elites and linked to a certain prestige, Higuchi exposes the faces and backgrounds of the actual workers that are "used and thrown away like rags."³³² 96.2% of the nuclear power plant workers are subcontractors, and only 3.8% are actual employees of the electric companies. Mitsuaki Nagao, who died of multiple myeloma, was exposed to 70 mSv in four years while working at the Fukushima nuclear plant. His case was the first one to be officially recognized, while he was still alive, as a death following a work accident: 80% of his radiation exposure was indeed acknowledged as caused by his work at the nuclear power plant. Activist Mikiko Watanabe recalls that Mitsuaki Nagao told her that in four years, not once had he met an employee of TEPCO. Moreover, the safety measures inside

³³¹ Ibid; *Washington Post*, April 10, 2011

³³² Kenji Higuchi, "Hibaku suru rōdōsha-tachi: shitaue, hiyatoi ga sasaeru genpatsu no jittai" [The workers as victims of radiation: subcontractors and day laborers supporting the reality of the nuclear power plants], May 23, 2011, KTV

the nuclear plant were very loose. Worker Ryōsuke Umeda, who worked at the Tsuruga and Shimane nuclear plants 35 years ago, also confirmed that the custom of removing the protective outfit or ignoring the alarm of the radiation meter was quite common among workers. “We would call this practice ‘nakigoroshi,’ (‘kill the ring’)” Umeda recalls with a smile in 2011. This practice from the 1970s seems to have been maintained for a long time: in 2009, 180 workers from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant were not wearing a dosimeter on them while working. Every 13 months, the nuclear power plants are stopped for a checkup that lasts three months. This is the moment where the workers enter the plant, and the majority of the men working in the nuclear power plants are elderly day laborers, and many of them are homeless. Their job is to enter the nuclear power plant for only a few minutes, and work on the maintenance of the facility. They are informally called “tokkōtai,” which literally means “special attack unit,” but is also a term that was used in World War II to designate the Special Forces trained as pilots to make a suicide crash attack. These men had no knowledge whatsoever of nuclear energy or nuclear plants, and were extremely poor, thus accepting a job that would pay JPY 8,000 (USD 74) per day. They were sometimes rewarded by a JPY 10,000 bill if they also brought someone else. Every maintenance period needs between 3,000 and 4,000 workers. According to a data by the MEXT, of the 270,000 men who worked in the nation’s nuclear power plants until 1999, 65,000 cannot be traced and it is even impossible to know if they are still alive or not.³³³ It is indeed very difficult to track down former nuclear workers, as they do not have any contact information listed anywhere, or deliberately avoid being approached.

³³³ Ibid.

Another nuclear worker, Norio Hirai, had left a testimony in 1996 that was published in December 2010 and the text grew popular after the 3.11 accident three months later. Hirai tells the nuclear story from his own point of view, an engineer who worked for the nuclear industry. Hirai claims to be an engineer specialized in building pipelines for large chemical plants. That is why when, in his late twenties, Japan started to invest and build nuclear power plants, he was recruited for the project. In his written testimony, which was subsequently translated into numerous languages, Hirai points out the serious disconnect between the team in charge of the design of those facilities and structures, and the one that actually builds them. This disconnect, Hirai states, was looked over or hidden by government officials who assured the public and even the workers that the facilities were safe and sound. Following the Kobe earthquake in January 1995, Hirai visited the city of Kobe and was surprised to see that despite being told that the officials had already carefully examined whether the nuclear plants, the bullet train, and the highway were properly built, there were many construction problems in them. He describes: “part of the wooden formwork for the concrete structure was found inside the piers of the elevated railway structure of the bullet train, and the structural steel of the highway piers was not adequately welded. At a casual glance the work-pieces appeared to be bonded together, but the filler was not melted enough, causing the welded parts to eventually become disjointed.”³³⁴ Hirai goes on to reveal that the construction workers and their supervisors are unskilled workers, therefore having no knowledge on the construction rules and failing to understand the magnitude of the consequences of even a small mistake. The author

³³⁴ Norio Hirai, “Genpatsu ga Donna Mono Ka Shitte Hoshii” [I Want You to Know What a Nuclear Power Plant Is], *JanJan*, December 2010; English version available at: https://www.academia.edu/667416/Norio_Hirai_I_Want_You_to_Know_What_a_Nuclear_Power_Plant_Is

observes that “[t]he workers never know exactly what they are doing, or how crucial each of these parts is. This is one of the reasons that the number of accidents has increased.”³³⁵ Moreover, radiation complicates the training of workers. The site is hot and dark, and the radiation protective masks make it difficult for the workers to communicate with one another, let alone teach. The workers are therefore forced to use gestures instead. Hirai also adds that the inspection of nuclear power plants in Japan are made after the full construction, which makes them pointless. Furthermore, the officials in charge of the inspections only listen to what the manufacturers and the construction companies explain, then certify if their documents are correct, which undermines the technical competence of the construction. The inspection process is also flawed: because of an internal bureaucratic reform and reduction of personnel, officials who had previously worked on fish, rice or silk farming were appointed as special inspectors of nuclear power plants. Communication seemed to lack as well; the special inspector in charge of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant was not immediately notified when a serious accident happened in 1987, and he learned about it from the *Yomiuri Shimbun* news the following day. These inspectors have control on many relevant factors for the plant construction, and most of these inspectors are also retired bureaucrats of the METI, with no nuclear inspection skills. Yet, concludes Hirai, they are powerful.³³⁶ Norio Hirai started working for the nuclear industry in 1966, and worked in various nuclear power plants for twenty years until he retired in 1988, two years before his death by cancer at 58 years old. In the 16-page long testimony, Hirai also bitterly recalls having strongly argued in favor of hiring inspectors that are impartial and independent from the ministries and the companies. However, nothing ever changed:

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid.

“[t]hus, Japan’s nuclear power policies remain too irresponsible and too ineffective.”³³⁷

The engineer further argues that Japan’s nuclear power plants are not designed to resist earthquakes. Even after the 1987 Fukushima nuclear incident where a reactor stopped operating, nothing was done to check on the other ten similar reactors that were still operating around the country: Hirai’s comment certainly sounds ominous now: “[w]e should be horrified about how earthquakes can affect the plants.”

Norio Hirai’s account of the nuclear workers coincide with Kenji Higuchi’s, as Hirai confirms that the workplace is unusual because it is physically and psychologically challenging, and the workers are not cared for: the protective shoes provided to them do not fit and make it hard to move around properly. They fear nothing, however, Hirai comments, because they know nothing. The workers recruited for this job are, indeed, uneducated unskilled old men who are often homeless or members of the social outcast group *buraku-min*.³³⁸ Another important point made by Hirai is that because of this poor way to hire the workers and their lack of proper training, the quality of the actual work is also compromised. The horrible sound of the alarm meter makes it hard to focus on the task, and to perform correctly. Hirai writes, “[s]omeone who has never heard [the sound of the alarm meter] before would be appalled by its loud sound, and the fear that it induces. It is this sound that tells the worker that he has already been exposed to as much radiation as

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Buraku-min (“hamlet people”) are Japan’s social outcast group, similar to India’s Untouchables, who have suffered discrimination issues up until very recently. The caste system in Japan, a legacy of its feudal past, was formally abolished in 1871. However, professional discrimination against them remained for a long time: in 1975, a Buraku rights group discovered the existence of a 330-page handwritten list of Buraku names and community locations that was being sold secretly to employers by mail order. More than 200 big name Japanese firms were using the list to screen job applicants, resulting in unemployment for the Buraku-min. Although nowadays discrimination against buraku-min is illegal, prejudice against them is still alive (e.g. During a meeting of LDP leaders in 2001, future Prime Minister Tarō Asō reportedly told the assembled group, “We are not going to let someone (referring to his rival candidate Hiromu Nonaka) from the buraku become the prime minister, are we?” *Japan Times*, January 25, 2009).

if ten X-ray images had been taken during that short period. He may have managed to fasten bolts and screws anyway, but chances are he has not followed the ‘diagonal’ order. The work has been compromised. And now, what will happen next?”³³⁹ The only training the workers received was a 5-hour briefing aimed at eliminating any anxiety among them: they are told by authorities that the people opposing nuclear power are liars, and that as long as the workers follow the government’s instructions, they will be fine. Moreover, the electric companies are also engaged in selling their nuclear products to the local residents: they invite celebrities to give talks and cooking classes, as well as cultural events and they distribute very colorful and child-friendly pamphlets to them. Hirai admits he was also guilty of this behavior, and compares this brainwashing to the *modus operandi* of religious cults such as Aum Shinrikyo.³⁴⁰

The title of the British documentary “Nuclear Ginza” is an interesting choice. Ginza is the district that is considered to be the most fashionable and glamorous of Tokyo. It is an elegant and upscale district that also evokes a frantically busy nightlife, and many underground or hidden businesses are located in that area. The prestigious aura that the nuclear power industry has been creating around itself since the mid-1950s is indeed very tangible. Tamami Nishikawa graduated from the Department of Sustainable Energy and Environmental Engineering with a major in nuclear energy in the spring 2011. Since she started graduate school, her ambition was to work at TEPCO, and she does not hide the fascination she had with the industry: “at the time, I thought nuclear energy was all fun and beautiful: it was a clean and safe energy after all. Or at least that’s what we were

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

continuously told.” In February 2011, one month before the Fukushima accident happened, Nishikawa and a few of her colleagues also interested in starting a career in the nuclear industry even went to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant to visit the workplace. When the 3.11 accident happened, Nishikawa’s life changed completely, and she felt like her professional goals were shattered. Through the work at her university, she started working in contact with the residents of Fukushima and realized for the first time that she had never thought of the human dimension of nuclear energy.³⁴¹

Before 2011, neither Kenji Higuchi nor Norio Hirai had succeeded in spreading their message of warning. The shape of anti-nuclear voices suddenly changed following the Fukushima accident, expanding their cause to the national level and the public started for the first time to seek more information on nuclear energy through testimonies and associations, such as the Citizens’ Nuclear Information Center (CNIC), which was founded in 1975 but did not become popular until after Fukushima.³⁴² Indeed, even after that, anti-nuclear activists say their national influence has been very weak as far as impact on nuclear policy is concerned: they would have to knock down a wall of pro-nuclear scholars, bureaucrats, politicians and businessmen that have managed to build an empire of over 50 nuclear reactors nationwide.³⁴³

Although the public has started to take a new interest in the country’s nuclear energy program, many among the elites are still perpetuating the safety myth in the wake of the anxiety crisis provoked by the Fukushima spill. Indeed, during the first few months after the accident, there was an explosion of inappropriate and baffling public comments

³⁴¹ *Wedge Infinity*, “‘Shūshoku saki no Daiichi Shibō wa Tokyo Denryoku’ no Kanojo ga tadotta michi” [The path that she eventually chose despite her first career choice being TEPCO], October 22, 2017

³⁴² Author’s Interview with Hideyuki Ban, CNIC, May 4, 2016

³⁴³ *Washington Post*, April 10, 2011

made by the people belonging to the Atomic Village, and especially by scientists and scholars. Associate professor at the Laboratory for Advanced Nuclear Energy Dr. Yoshihisa Matsumoto said on the TV program *Super Morning* that “even if the radiation sterilizes your semen, you are always protected by the Gene God who is watching over you.”³⁴⁴ Prof. Keiichi Nakagawa of Tokyo University, a plutonium expert, stated on TV on March 29, 2011, that plutonium was much too heavy to be able to fly, thus causing no problem at all.³⁴⁵ Prof. Muneo Morokuzu of Tokyo University said on March 30, 2011: “radiation was much more dangerous in the 1960s, because of all the various nuclear tests around the world. Thus after Fukushima, it is completely safe here, and we should feel equally relieved.”³⁴⁶ Dr. Ryūta Kawashima of Tōhoku University offered a similar comment: “because of all the nuclear tests by the United States and the Soviet Union, up until the Fukushima accident the radiation contained in the air was between a few hundreds to a thousand times worse than after the accident. And there have never been any proof of increase in cancer patients.”³⁴⁷ Dr. Naoto Sekimura of Tokyo University School of Engineering also added in April 2011 that “a nuclear meltdown is simply impossible.”³⁴⁸ The clumsy policy of hiding or denying a meltdown seems to have started immediately after the 3.11 disaster: when the news of the accident broke at the United Nations in Geneva, where Akira Kawasaki of ICAN was participating, the Ambassador of Japan to the UN requested that Kawasaki gave a talk about the news, but he also told him not to say the word “meltdown.” In hindsight, Kawasaki commented, “it was a strange idea, because all

³⁴⁴ Asahi TV, *Super Morning*, March 23, 2011

³⁴⁵ Nippon TV, March 29, 2011

³⁴⁶ *Shūkan Gendai*, April 16, 2011

³⁴⁷ *Shūkan Gendai*, April 16, 2011

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

the news were already talking about a meltdown; how was Japan going to hide that reality?”³⁴⁹ Prof. Shun’ichi Yamashita, a medical scientist serving as dean and professor at the Graduate School of Biomedical sciences at Nagasaki University, as well as appointed scientific advisor in the Fukushima accident, stated at a conference in the Fukushima City Hall in May 2011 that “radiation will not have any effects on people who smile happily, but it will certainly affect people who brood over it. It was scientifically proven by an experiment on animals,” adding that “Fukushima hasn’t done anything and it became famous – it definitely beat Hiroshima and Nagasaki!”³⁵⁰

These are a few examples of the sudden responses of scholars and intellectuals during the first weeks after the Fukushima accident. A common theme and tone can be found in these assertions: despite coming from scholars, many of these statements seem contradictory and pseudo-scientific. Further, their overall tone is patronizing as if they were meant to address children. Their confidence also comes from the fact that they know they are protected by their nuclear community, i.e. the Atomic Village, but also by their titles from prestigious institutions. As Chie Nakane observes, this tendency of membership of an institution plays an important role among intellectuals in Japan: “what matters most (...) is not whether a man holds or does not hold a Ph.D. but rather from which university he graduated. Thus the criterion by which Japanese classify individuals socially tends to be that of particular institution, rather than of universal attribute.”³⁵¹ Again, their membership to the community gives them legitimacy and power. However, those frantic public responses that appeared following the accident can be traced to what Tetsunari Iida stated

³⁴⁹ Author’s conversation with Akira Kawasaki, April 10, 2016

³⁵⁰ The footage of his statement is available at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=8&v=PuwFrNEgDTg

³⁵¹ Chie Nakane, *ibid.* p. 3

in 1999: when the *tatema* becomes too difficult to keep up with, especially after a serious accident, there will be some hysterical responses by the Atomic Village at first. That will eventually die down, however, and return to the usual maintenance of the normal *tatema*.

Conclusion:

This chapter showed that the second part of the Nuclear Bargain was continued over the decades and took the form of a nuclear energy culture that encompasses nuclear myths, imagery, and symbolism. These elements often have the power of forging an identity,³⁵² and in this case, they were able to consolidate Japan's nuclear energy culture. Such consolidation has been a very powerful tool in making Japan's nuclear hedging stance alive, because of the sense of necessity, unity, and even of pride, that the nuclear energy culture created over time.

The safety myth has deeply infiltrated everyday life in Japan up until the Fukushima accident, and the religious symbolism and the dogmatic nature of the campaign promoting nuclear power is truly remarkable. The constant bombardment of nuclear energy images and metaphors that started with the nuclear energy part of Japan's Nuclear Bargain in the mid-1950s have in fact numbed the perception of several generations, and steadily created a normalized nuclear culture that has run in the background of the public's lives. Until Fukushima happened.

The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident is called by many a "watershed event," a defining moment in the history of nuclear energy in the world. Fukushima was an extremely shocking event and a turning point in many ways, and brought about an important change in the public's perception of nuclear energy safety. However, as former Prime Minister Naoto Kan warns, the LDP and the Atomic Village has already started to spearhead the plan to bring all the 54 nuclear power plants back online as soon as possible.³⁵³

³⁵² John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, W. W. Norton & Company, 1999; Anthony DiFilippo, *Japanese Nuclear Disarmament Policies, Practices and National Identity*, 2009

³⁵³ Naoto Kan, "Fukushima Daini Genpatsu no Hairo," June 15, 2018 in response to statement by Michiaki

CHAPTER IV

Nuclear Weapons and Political Rhetoric

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Hirose, CEO of the Japan Gas Association, that Japan should and is planning to bring back online all national nuclear plants (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, June 14, 2018)

Introduction:

In the late 1980s, just as the Cold War was ending, a comic book series called *Silent Service* appeared in Japan. In the series, that ran through 1996, the U.S. and Japan jointly develop Japan's first nuclear-powered and-armed submarine. The project must be kept away from the Japanese public opinion, who suffers from a severe nuclear allergy. However, during a joint training, the submarine's crew, led by charismatic Captain Shirō Kaieda, mutinies and the submarine disappears into the ocean. When Kaieda and his submarine, renamed Yamato, reappears, he declares the submarine to be an independent state. The U.S. and the USSR try to destroy the submarine, but Yamato is the most powerful submarine in the world and launches nuclear strikes, humiliating and defeating both superpowers. Therefore, the Japanese government faces a painful dilemma: collaborating with the US or saving the Yamato and Kaieda. However, as the story unfolds, Kaieda is revealed to be a pacifist who, despite the nuclear massacre he provoked, collaborates with the United Nations in order to promote nuclear disarmament.³⁵⁴ This fascinating manga series won several awards and was incredibly popular in Japan in the 1990s. It was made into a movie and into an anime, and was even discussed in a session at the Diet. Critic Yoshio Suzuki stated that "it is a coup d'état in the manga world, and a manga that invites a coup d'état," and the work has become the Bible of young rightists who consider the author, Kaiji Kawaguchi, as the new Yukio Mishima.³⁵⁵

This final chapter will tackle the fourth important element that is part of Japan's nuclear hedging posture. It will analyze the flipside of the pacifist antimilitarist identity:

³⁵⁴ Kaiji Kawaguchi, *Chinmoku no Kantai (Silent Service)*, Kodansha, 1988-1996

³⁵⁵ Frederik L. Schodt, *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga*, Stone Bridge Pr, 2011, p. 167

how has the evolution of political discourse on Japan's nuclear option shaped the country's nuclear hedging posture? The first section will argue that despite a renaissance of the nuclear debate, Japan's nuclear rhetoric is not a new phenomenon. The second section will demonstrate that the Japanese nuclear debate is also deeply influenced by Japan's relationship with the United States. Fear of abandonment, necessity of reassurance, and mistrust are important factors that have impacted not only the domestic nuclear debate, but also Japan's security identity. The third section will add the recent neo-nationalist dimension to the nuclear debate, and argue that it is merging with the main political rhetoric of such debate.



Captain Shirō Kaieda: "Soon the world will learn that a dialogue between equal states will only be possible when all sides have the ultimate weapon - That is the real truth of this world!!" (*The Silent Service* © Kaiji Kawaguchi, 1988)

4.1 *A Shift in the Nuclear Weapons Debate?*

According to an October 2006 *Asahi Shimbun* poll, 82% of the respondents answered that Japan should maintain the Three Non-Nuclear Principles in the future, while 10% responded that Japan should acquire nuclear weapons, and 8% replied they did not know. In the same survey, to the question “While Prime Minister Shinzō Abe denies the possibility of Japan going nuclear, Foreign Minister Tarō Asō keeps acknowledging the option of nuclearization of Japan. Do you think the Abe government is poorly coordinated as far as national policies are concerned?” 52% answered “yes,” 30% responded “no,” and 18% did not have an opinion. The survey also asked the respondents if they felt threatened by North Korea’s nuclear weapons, to which a great majority (90%) answered “yes,” while only 8% answered “no” and 2% replied they did not know.³⁵⁶ The survey was indeed conducted on October 27 and 28, only two weeks after North Korea’s nuclear test on October 9, 2006. Despite the perception of an imminent security threat, the poll shows that the Three Non-Nuclear Principles are considered by the majority of the public as non-negotiable pillars of Japan’s national policy. Eleven years later, the 2017 Annual Report on Public Opinion by the Genron NPO shows that 69% of the Japanese respondents answered that they would oppose Japan acquiring nuclear weapons if North Korea does not give up

³⁵⁶ *Asahi Shimbun*, October 29, 2006

its own. Only 12% answered that they would support Japan's nuclear option.³⁵⁷ Lawyer Jun Sasamoto of the Japan Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (JALANA) and Director of the Japan Lawyers International Solidarity Association (JALISA) writes that the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, along with the pacifist Constitution, stem from "the special feeling that the Japanese harbor because of the country's status as the only nation that has been subjected to atomic bombing."³⁵⁸

While the public has consistently supported the preservation of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles; some government officials on the other hand have a history of display of frustration, or even contempt of these Principles. Although the nuclear option still seems unthinkable, the nuclear debate in Japan has seen an opening in the past 20 years. Andrew Oros even states, 2002 marks "the year Japan's nuclear option re-entered acceptable public discourse."³⁵⁹ Indeed, a survey conducted by *Fuji News Network* in September 2017, following North Korea's nuclear test on September 3, shows that 53.7% of the respondents answered "no" to the question "should a debate on the revision of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles be opened?" while those who answered "yes" accounted to 43.2%.³⁶⁰ These figures indicate that although the ones opposing a nuclear Japan still constitute the majority; the public is now more open to debating the option. The regional security factor is undoubtedly playing an important role: uncertainty around the North Korean nuclear threat has had an influence on the public's increased acceptance of the national nuclearization debate. However, how are these security concerns incorporated into the

³⁵⁷ The Genron NPO, *Poll 2017 – Annual Public Opinion Report: The Future of Northeast Asia and the State of Democracy*, 2018

³⁵⁸ Jun Sasamoto, "The Globalization of Article 9," JALANA: http://www.hankaku-j.org/data/jalana/npt_011.html

³⁵⁹ Andrew L. Oros, "Godzilla's Return" in *Japan's Nuclear Option – Security, Politics, and Policy in the 21st Century*, Self & Thompson, 2003, p. 51

³⁶⁰ *Fuji News Network*, September 17, 2017

postwar pacifist stance and what caused the alleged shift in the early 2000s? This chapter argues that the evolution of the Japanese nuclear debate shows that over the years, the government has attempted to nuance Japan's nuclear policy and convey publicly some consistency between the two parts of the original Nuclear Bargain. In other words, it has consolidated the national nuclear policy by combining a full consciousness of Japan's nuclear latency with the traditional non-nuclear weapons policy.

The increase of nuclear remarks around the turn of the century, indeed, raises the question of Japan's nuclear hedging stance. This boost of the nuclear narrative is particularly remarkable because of Japan's status as a virtual nuclear weapons state, which makes the country stand out as a potential proliferator. Even after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident, explaining to the media the reasons why he opposes dismantling the country's nuclear reactors, LDP politician and former Minister of Defense Ishiba Shigeru stated: "Having nuclear plants shows to other nations that Japan can make nuclear weapons."³⁶¹

In his 2002 article, which still remains the centerpiece of the literature on nuclear hedging, Eli Levite defines the concept of nuclear hedging as "A national strategy of maintaining, or at least appearing to maintain, a viable option for the relatively rapid acquisition of nuclear weapons, based on an indigenous technical capacity to produce them within a relatively short time frame ranging from several weeks to a few years."³⁶²

Japan indeed shows at least two of the three symptoms of a country that has chosen to adopt a nuclear hedging strategy, according to Wyn Bowen and Matthew Moran's parameters.³⁶³

³⁶¹ *AP*, July 31, 2012

³⁶² Ariel E. Levite, "Never Say Never Again: Nuclear Reversal Revisited", *International Security*, 27:3, Winter 2002, p. 69

³⁶³ Wyn Bowen and Matthew Moran, "Living with Nuclear Hedging", *International Affairs*, Vol. 91, Issue

First, Japan possesses a high degree of nuclear latency: roughly seventy years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan has a stockpile of over 48 metric tons of separated plutonium, enough to make 6,000 warheads like the one used for Nagasaki.³⁶⁴

Despite being a seismically unstable country, Japan still struggles to find a concrete solution to its controversial policy of reprocessing, which continues to produce a substantial amount of weapons-grade plutonium and, as mentioned in the previous chapter, has suffered a lot of instability and accidents. Although Japan has insisted over the years that it is determined not to develop nuclear weapons, doubts always linger both in Northeast Asia and in the United States. Morton Halperin, former director of the U.S. Department of State's Policy Planning Staff, gave a warning in 1999: "No one should take for granted the Japanese commitment over the long run to refrain from developing nuclear weapons."³⁶⁵

In addition to its growing stockpile of plutonium that is a source of concern, Japan also shows additional traits of a nuclear hedging stance: the second parameter listed by Bowen and Moran is the nuclear narrative, i.e. any "[p]olitical discourse and domestic debate regarding nuclear issues."³⁶⁶ The beginning of the 21st century has seen a sudden increase of public nuclear statements by several Japanese government officials, party members and academics. If part of a hedging strategy, these statements are meant to provide a deterrent against any potential aggressor or any rival state. It would thus make perfect sense that public statements in favor of a domestic nuclear option would start appearing in 2002, when President George W. Bush began his presidency by including North Korea

4, July 2015

³⁶⁴ Peter Wynn Kirby, "Japan's Plutonium Problem", *New York Times*, August 16, 2015

³⁶⁵ Morton Halperin, "The Nuclear Dimensions of the U.S.-Japan Alliance," Nautilus Institute, July 9, 1999, p. 15-16

³⁶⁶ Bowen and Moran, *ibid.*

among the “Axis of Evil” states.³⁶⁷ The hostile tones between the United States and the DPRK escalated very rapidly in 2002 and throughout the George W. Bush administration, and the stronger tones of the nuclear debate in Japan appeared to signal a higher perception of the North Korean threat and the emergence of a more realist view vis-à-vis the volatile strategic environment.

Although the third parameter – diplomatic cat and mouse – is not present in the case of Japan, it is noteworthy that Japan’s unclear behavior has been raising more suspicions about its nuclear intentions. On June 20, 2012, for example, the government altered Article 2 of Japan’s 1956 Basic Law on Atomic Energy to add “national security” among the purposes for nuclear power,³⁶⁸ a rather cryptic expression which could lead to loose interpretations of the clause, including the military use of nuclear power. This tiny change in the law fueled concern in East Asian countries, to which the Japanese government responded that the amendment would not conflict with the “peaceful use” of nuclear power, and is actually aimed at preventing nuclear proliferation.³⁶⁹ The vagueness of the amendment and of the official explanation reflects Japan’s nuclear hedging stance.

Since the North Korean and Chinese military buildup in the late 1990s, Japan has been seen as being more anxious and concerned about its own safety. “No one feels safe with missiles flying over their head,” commented John Neuffer, a political analyst for the Mitsui Marine Research Institute in Tokyo.³⁷⁰ Historian and political analyst Hideaki

³⁶⁷ See President George W. Bush’s 2002 State of the Union Address, January 29, 2002

³⁶⁸ The new provision of the basic law on atomic energy states “The safe use of atomic power is aimed at contributing to the protection of the people’s lives, health and property, environment conservation and national security”, *Tokyo Shimbun*, “‘Genshiryoku no kenpō’, kossori henkō” (Atomic energy basic law, secretly altered), June 21, 2012; *Asahi Shimbun*, “‘National Security’ Amendment to Nuclear Law Raises Fears of Military Use”, June 21, 2012

³⁶⁹ *Asahi Shimbun*, “‘National Security’ Amendment to Nuclear Law Raises Fears of Military Use”, June 21, 2012

³⁷⁰ *SF Gate*, “Japan Rattling Its Rusty Saber – North Korean threat tests Pacifism”, August 3, 1999

Kase echoed Neuffer's thoughts in 1999: "Public opinion has changed dramatically since August of last year, when North Korea shot off its missile. More and more, people are getting apprehensive."³⁷¹ Some argued or speculated explicitly that it would be a natural reaction for a country like Japan to acquire nuclear weapons vis-à-vis Pyongyang's ambitions: in March 2003, Vice President Dick Cheney claimed North Korea could trigger a regional "arms race" and that "others, perhaps Japan, for example, may be forced to consider whether or not they want to readdress the nuclear question."³⁷²

According to a December 2010 poll by the newspaper *Sankei Shimbun*, 96 percent of 2,873 participants answered that Japan should at least publicly debate the nuclear option.³⁷³ Moreover, 85 percent of the participants favored the nuclear option, and 78 percent responded that US extended nuclear deterrence remains unreliable.³⁷⁴ Since the *Sankei Shimbun* is a major conservative newspaper with strong ties to the entrepreneurial world, and the poll respondents (2422 men and 451 women) were only *Sankei Shimbun* readers, the results is not be a representative sample of the Japanese public as a whole, which might easily explain the dramatic tilt in these figures towards a nationalist view. However, the previously mentioned September 2017 poll does seem to confirm that there is a shift in the opinion public on the topic of nuclear debate. Some Japan experts, indeed, have associated this recent Japanese tendency to discuss a domestic nuclear option with a possible erosion of the nuclear taboo,³⁷⁵ or at least with a new willingness to talk more

³⁷¹ *The Washington Post*, "Japan Reluctantly Sharpening Its Sword", August 2, 1999

³⁷² Dick Cheney, cited in "North Korea: US-Japan Relations", *Council of Foreign Relations*, May 15, 2003

³⁷³ *Sankei Shimbun*, "Nihon no kakubusō – 'giron dake demo okonau beki' ga 96%" (Japan's Nuclear Option: "we should at least discuss it": 96%), December 16, 2010

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵ The use of the phrase "nuclear taboo" does not refer to Nina Tannenwald's famous phrase indicating the widespread inhibition on the use of nuclear weapons, but rather to Japanese elites' strong and long-standing reluctance to publicly discuss a nuclear option for Japan (for further reading, see for example Mike Mochizuki, "Japan Tests the Nuclear Taboo", *Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 14, No. 2, July 2007), deriving

openly about it.

Elizabeth Bakanic, for example, mentions the “end of Japan’s nuclear taboo”, arguing that the recent Japanese elites’ shift in attitude towards a nuclear Japan is evident, as is the public’s growing tolerance vis-à-vis such change.³⁷⁶ Although stating that Japanese leaders are aware that a nuclear option for their country would not be an optimal choice, Sheila Smith also observes that the turn of the century has seen a diminished sense of surprise or shock at the idea of a debate over the nuclear option.³⁷⁷

While it is possible to talk about a sudden explosion of public statements since 2002, it would not be completely correct to talk about an erosion of the nuclear taboo. The turn of the 21st century is hardly the first time that Japanese elites have made statements in favor of Japanese nuclear weapons: in other words, Japan’s signs of a nuclear hedging had already started to show in the late 1950s, and these statements are sometimes accompanied by a questioning of the U.S.-Japan alliance and U.S. credibility.

In May 1957, Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi was the first high-ranking official to publicly state, during a Diet session, that the postwar pacifist Constitution did not explicitly forbid Japan from possessing nuclear weapons if they are small,³⁷⁸ causing several different Dietmen to investigate on his intentions. In fact, Kishi had been asked in the previous days by different Dietmen to clarify his views on nuclear weapons and the Constitution. On May 7, Kishi answered to a question by Dietman Hōsei Yoshida with a very long, complicated and confusing phrasal structure that, although the Constitution would not permit Japan to

from a strong public aversion of nuclear weapons (nuclear allergy).

³⁷⁶ Elizabeth D. Bakanic, “The End of Japan’s Nuclear Taboo”, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, June 9, 2008

³⁷⁷ Sheila A. Smith, “Japan’s Future Strategic Options and the US-Japan Alliance”, in *Japan’s Nuclear Option – Security, Politics, and Policy in the 21st Century*, Self & Thompson, 2003, p. 21-22

³⁷⁸ The incident is reported in Hiroki Sugita, *Kenshou Hikaku no Sentaku (Reviewing Japan’s Decision to Pursue Non-Nuclear Weapon State)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), p.47

possess nuclear weapons, depending on the interpretation of the Constitution and on the definition of “nuclear weapons,” the constitutional text does not exclude entirely the possibility that Japan could possess them.³⁷⁹ The following year in November, lieutenant-general Kumao Imoto suggested during a visit to the United States that Japan would be better off with nuclear weapons if it were to fight against an enemy possessing such weapons.³⁸⁰ Kishi, moreover, after a visit to the Tōkai-mura nuclear facility in 1958, wrote in his memoirs that:

Nuclear technology could be used both as weapon and for peaceful purposes. The use of nuclear technology is a political decision. Given that it has decided not to use nuclear technology for weapons, Japan can only use it for peaceful purposes, which would reflect the will of the nation and of the people. However, with technology automatically advancing, so is the possibility of building weapons. Japan does not have nuclear weapons, but by showing that we possess the technology to build them, we can increase our political leverage at the international level when it comes to disarmament issues and nuclear testing.³⁸¹

In May 1959, Defense Agency Director General Shigejirō Inō publicly considered the option for Japan to develop nuclear-armed missiles in the future.³⁸² The 1960s and 1970s also saw statements by Japanese elites that were at odds with the country’s non-nuclear policy. At the 1965 U.S.-Japan summit, for example, Prime Minister Eisaku Satō told President Lyndon Johnson that he thought Japan should acquire nuclear weapons if China possessed them.³⁸³ At a Diet session on April 4, 1968, State Minister Kaneshichi Masuda responded using an elaborate and complex rhetoric to a question by Dietman Seiichi Inaba on the relationship between the Constitution and the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. Masuda stated that the Constitution, indeed, does not forbid Japan to acquire

³⁷⁹ May 7, 1957 Diet Session: <http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/SENTAKU/sangiin/026/0514/02605070514024a.html>

³⁸⁰ Hiroki Sugita, op. cit.

³⁸¹ Yoshitaka Yamamoto, *Fukushima no genpatsu jiko wo megutte – iktsu ka manabi eta koto* [Studying the Fukushima nuclear accident – a few things we have learnt], Misuzu Shobō, 2011

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Katsuhisa Furukawa, “Japan’s Future Strategic Options and the US-Japan Alliance”, in *Japan’s Nuclear Option – Security, Politics, and Policy in the 21st Century*, Self & Thompson, 2003, p. 104

nuclear weapons; however, the Three Non-Nuclear Principles automatically intervene to cover that loophole, which makes it not possible for the country to possess such weapons.”³⁸⁴

In a January 14, 1969 telegram to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Alexis Johnson referred that Eisaku Satō blurted out that the Three Non-Nuclear Principles were “absurd.”³⁸⁵ Incidentally, one year later, Satō had also stated at a press conference that the Mutual Security Treaty signed with the United States on January 19, 1960 might be revised “after two or three years.” The “gaffe,” as was called by the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, was quickly denied by a “shocked” Foreign Minister Kiichi Aichi who reassured the United States that the Treaty was still the cornerstone of Japan’s security policy and of the alliance.³⁸⁶

The deep interest that Satō harbored towards nuclear weapons is now well-known. Since the publication of the November 1994 *Asahi Shimbun* article describing a secret study made by the Cabinet Research Office in 1967, several scholars and journalists in Japan and abroad have tried to understand if Japan had indeed the will to go nuclear while establishing simultaneously an official Non-Nuclear Policy. According to Akira Kurosaki, although the document shows that the country’s thriving civil nuclear program technically contributed to the acquisition of a latent nuclear weapon material, the latent capability developed by the program was not intentional by the Japanese government. Adding on to Jacques Hymans’ analysis that it was impossible for the Japanese government to be able to

³⁸⁴ April 4, 1968 Diet Session: <http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/SENTAKU/sangiin/058/1380/05804041380013a.html>

³⁸⁵ *The Japan Times*, June 11, 2000

³⁸⁶ Telegram from US Embassy in Tokyo to Department of State, Subject: “Sato’s Gaffe Re MST”, May 20-21, 1970, Record Group 59, Declassification Review Project NND969023, Box 1753, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD

acquire nuclear weapons because of the quantity of players at stake and the intricate web of various interests of the nuclear industry complex, Kurosaki demonstrates that, indeed, Japan did not deliberately adopt a nuclear hedging strategy. The historian argues that the Cabinet Research Office did not show any actual pragmatism and the 1969 report did not investigate the most feasible method for Japan to manufacture nuclear weapons in the first place.³⁸⁷ As Governor of Hiroshima Hidehiko Yuzaki stated, it is most certain that the government, as an organization (*soshiki*), never considered crossing the nuclear Rubicon. There might be some isolated voices privately wishing that Japan acquired nuclear weapons, Yuzaki added, but it was never a plan supported by the whole *soshiki*.³⁸⁸ The notion of *soshiki* means “organization, formation, structure, system” but has also a connotation of hierarchy and compactness. In fact, even if the nuclear discussion requires to separate the thinking of the *soshiki* and the lone voices promoting a nuclear Japan, it is important to wonder what the meaning of these isolated voices is. The long series of nuclear comments by politicians and policy-makers indeed continued uninterrupted through the 1970s.

According to an airgram from the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo to the Department of State, in 1971 Shintarō Ishihara, then a promising young LDP politician, claimed “a Japanese nuclear system was necessary in order to trigger the American deterrent in case Japan was attacked or seriously threatened because the American nuclear umbrella, as presently constituted, was not, for Japan, a reliable deterrent.”³⁸⁹ Interestingly, the U.S. Embassy

³⁸⁷ Akira Kurosaki, “Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Weapon Potential: A Historical Analysis of Japan in the 1960s,” *The Nonproliferation Review*, September 2017

³⁸⁸ Athor’s interview with Hiroshima Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki, April 14, 2016

³⁸⁹ Airgram from US Embassy in Tokyo to Department of State, Subject: “LDP Dietman Shintaro Ishihara’s arguments for a Japanese nuclear force”, February 19, 1971, NND 969023, Box 1752, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD

comments in the airgram that Ishihara has little political influence in his own party, and he is literally the only one who publicly advocates nuclear weapons for Japan. However, it is possible that “Ishihara’s popularity as a culture hero will enable him to convince his large following among Japanese youth that Japan should go nuclear. Should he be able to do so, others competing politicians might also find it politically profitable to advocate such a program or, failing that, to argue against closing Japan’s options by ratifying the NPT. (...) Ishihara’s doubts about U.S. credibility are another matter. They are considerably more widely held, even though few Japanese would articulate them as frankly as Ishihara did.”³⁹⁰ As Narushige Michishita suggests, many of these political comments are aimed at the United States and might be a subtle way to request stronger extended deterrence guarantees.³⁹¹

Tanaka Kakuei, who succeeded Satō as Prime Minister in 1972, reaffirmed the Three Non-Nuclear Principles on March 20, 1973, but also added that “while we are not able to have offensive nuclear weapons, it is not a question of saying we will have no nuclear weapons at all.”³⁹² In fact, on March 13, Tanaka had stated that “strategic nuclear weapons are offensive in character and tactical nuclear weapons are offensive,” and added that “defensive nuclear weapons are constitutional.”³⁹³ The telegram from the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo to the Secretary of State in March 23, 1973 offers additional details on the debate over nuclear weapons at the Diet in March 1973. The day after Tanaka’s nuclear comment, in fact, in expectation that opposition parties would exploit this inconsistency, the Defense

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Narushige Michishita, author’s interview, February 20, 2018

³⁹² *New Scientist*, Vol. 57, No. 839, March 29, 1973

³⁹³ Telegram from US Embassy in Tokyo to Secretary of State, Subject: “Diet Debate on Constitutionality of Defensive Nuclear Weapons.” March 23, 1973, Record Group 59, Declassification Review Project NND 969023, Box 1752, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD

Agency and the Cabinet Legislative Bureau presented the government's unified view "consistent with and affirming long-standing constitutional interpretation." This official unified view consisted in three points: 1) that the Prime Minister's previous day statement did not alter the government's unified view on possession of nuclear weapons; 2) that nuclear weapons in general are offensive in character and that Japan would not possess them; 3) that the constitution, notwithstanding above, does not prohibit possession of small purely defensive nuclear weapons, which do not threaten other nations.³⁹⁴ The last part of the telegram also emphasizes the purpose of domestic politics being at stake in this debate over the constitutionality of nuclear weapons. Within the right wing of the LDP, the document concludes, the unified view statement has been criticized as yet another example of inept handling of interpellations and for providing golden opportunity for opposition parties to delay Diet deliberations still further. On the other hand, the telegram reports, the opposition parties are split on the best way to exploit the government's statement. The SDP, indeed, was initially willing to let the response stand without further question. However, the JSP and the Komeito kept the issue alive, and "all opposition parties now give every evidence of continuing to raise the issue at every opportunity."³⁹⁵

Although the pro-nuclear statements did not represent the views of the whole LDP,³⁹⁶ they are a good indication of the nuclear option being discussed regularly within the ruling party and in Diet sessions during the Cold War, often accompanied by feelings of mistrust in U.S. credibility. Further, as the document shows, there was also an important domestic

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Airgram from US Embassy in Tokyo to Department of State, Subject: "LDP Dietman Shintaro Ishihara's arguments for a Japanese nuclear force", February 19, 1971, Record Group 59, Declassification Review Project NND 969023, Box 1752, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD

dynamic at stake, flattening the debate over nuclear weapons into a fight among parties and political faction.

In October 1999, just before the turn of the century, newly appointed Vice Minister of the Defense Agency Shingo Nishimura shocked the public when he stated in an interview with *Play Boy Japan* that Japan should acquire nuclear weapons. Asked about the likelihood of war between India and Pakistan, Nishimura answered in the Osaka dialect: "It's unlikely that there will be war: as long as two sides have nuclear weapons, there is no chance of nuclear war. The risk is much higher when a country does not have nuclear weapons. Japan is therefore in the most dangerous situation. The Diet should really look into finding a way to arm Japan with nuclear weapons."³⁹⁷ Nishimura went on to compare nuclear deterrence to rape laws: "if there were no punishments for rape, then all men—including myself—would be rapists. We do not become rapists because there is the deterrent of punishment."³⁹⁸ His nuclear remarks, as well as his most inappropriate rape analogy, ignited a firestorm of criticism in the country. Following heavy pressures, Nishimura was immediately forced to resign.

Some have compared the reaction this incident caused with the one triggered by the statements made in late May early June 2002 by Shinzō Abe (at the time Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary in the Koizumi Cabinet) and then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda.³⁹⁹ Abe told students at Waseda University in Tokyo that the use of nuclear weapons would not necessarily violate the Japanese constitution.⁴⁰⁰ Chief Cabinet

³⁹⁷ *Asahi Shimbun*, October 25, 1999; *Japan Times*, October 20, 1999; *Washington Post*, October 21, 1999; *The Guardian*, October 21, 1999; *Foreign Policy*, December 31, 1999; *The New York Times*, October 21, 1999. The entire interview (in Japanese) is available at: <http://www.asyura2.com/sora/bd4/msg/26.html>

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Robyn Lim, *The Geopolitics of East Asia: The Search For Equilibrium*, Routledge, 2005, p. 184

⁴⁰⁰ See, for example, *The Wall Street Journal*, "Abe's World View: In His Own Words"; December 18, 2012

Secretary Yasuo Fukuda then backed up Abe's claim, stating that he believed Japan was entitled to – though it did not intend – acquire nuclear weapons. Robyn Lim points out that despite a public outcry, neither Abe nor Fukuda were at risk of losing their jobs, indicating that the nuclear taboo was clearly eroding.⁴⁰¹

These two different outcomes, however, can hardly be placed on the same level and cannot be indicators of a sudden erosion of a nuclear taboo. The public's outrage following Nishimura's provocative statements was mainly driven by the combination of his view on nuclear weapons and his highly offensive and disturbing comments on women. One of the most vocal reaction came indeed from the Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility, who condemned the official's words of extreme hate and discrimination towards women.⁴⁰² Moreover, the *Asahi Shimbun* op-ed that spoke up against his words started with "The women's fury will not calm down," and went on to reflect on the parity between genders, as well as reporting on the petition to remove Nishimura from his job started by Professor Yasutaka Machimura of Asia University. The nuclear remark was mentioned once in a sentence that read "It goes without saying that [Shingo Nishimura] completely neglected our country's postwar non-nuclear policy that we made sure to protect for a long time and with great effort," before continuing to focus on the gender issue again.⁴⁰³

In fact, Nishimura had made a similar statement earlier in 1999: in an interview with the *Washington Post* on August 2, he stated: "Japan must be like NATO countries. We must have the military power and the legal authority to act on it. We ought to have aircraft

⁴⁰¹ Lim, *op. cit.*, p. 184

⁴⁰² *Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility*, "Letter of protest against Vice Minister of the Defense Agency Shingo Nishimura's statements", November 9, 1999

⁴⁰³ *Asahi Shimbun*, October 23, 1999 (evening news)

carriers, long-range missiles, long-range bombers. We should even have an atomic bomb!”⁴⁰⁴ This statement went rather unnoticed in Japan, which explains Nishimura’s emboldenment later on in his interview in *Play Boy Japan*.

Moreover, although the public seemed to react with confusion to Shinzō Abe’s and Yasuo Fukuda’s spring 2002 statements, the idea of a hypothetical nuclear option allowed by the Constitution was certainly neither new nor surprising. As mentioned earlier, Shinzō Abe’s own grandfather Nobusuke Kishi had already given that interpretation of the Constitution in 1957, which signals a strong consistency in the country’s conservative leadership – especially if coming from a dynastical political thinking – throughout the decades following the end of World War II.

Following Abe and Fukuda’s comments of 2002, then Prime Minister Jun’ichirō Koizumi clarified the government’s stance as: “it is significant that although we could possess [nuclear weapons], we don’t.”⁴⁰⁵ Quizzed by other parties about the government’s nuclear intentions, Koizumi and Fukuda again insisted on June 10, 2002 that “[o]ur nation has been aggressively pursuing a diplomacy to promote nuclear non-proliferation and end nuclear tests. We are working hard to create a world where nuclear weapons don't exist.”⁴⁰⁶ In fact, Japan’s posture of possessing the capabilities but not going nuclear was explored by then Minister for Foreign Affairs Keizō Obuchi already in 1998. In a debate at the House of Representatives on May 13, 1998, Obuchi stresses the importance and exceptionality of Japan’s international status as a nuclear victim, and adds that “because Japan, despite its

⁴⁰⁴ *Washington Post*, October 21, 1999, p. A23

⁴⁰⁵ *Associated Press*, “Koizumi denies change in non-nuclear policy amid reports of officials suggesting a switch”, May 31, 2002

⁴⁰⁶ Jun’ichirō Koizumi and Yasuo Fukuda, June 10, 2002, Debate at the House of Representatives, Diet of Japan: http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_kaigiroku.nsf/html/kaigiroku/0005_1.htm

nuclear capabilities, refuses to acquire nuclear weapons, its stance should be more widely recognized internationally.”⁴⁰⁷ Another statement that seems to confirm this very argument by the government is then Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Akira Amari’s assertion that “Japan has the capabilities [to go nuclear], but doesn’t. The fact that Japan declares that it has no intention of doing so while maintaining those capabilities is what truly makes Japan’s policy convincing. In fact, if a country that doesn’t have the capabilities to go nuclear declares that it will not go nuclear, it is just lip-service. However, Japan does have the technical capabilities, yet it asserts that it will not go nuclear: *this* is exactly what makes Japan a credible advocate for abolition of nuclear weapons around the world.”⁴⁰⁸

Scholars started to take part in the public debate over the nuclear option in 2003. In August 2003, *Shokun!*, a former major conservative monthly magazine, featured a special section that debated the nuclear issue. The section gathered forty-five essays by prominent security experts, journalists, and writers who discussed the pros and cons of Japan’s nuclear option. Six of them explicitly favored the acquisition of nuclear weapons, while others observed that while a time may come for Japan to possess such weapons, it might not be a wise move to acquire them right away. Journalist Yoshiko Sakurai, for instance, insisted that the most important thing to do is “not to deny the Japanese capability to acquire nuclear weapons.” According to her, it is paramount for Japan to “maintain its nuclear card.”⁴⁰⁹ Terumasa Nakanishi, professor at Kyōto University, who strongly supports the nuclear

⁴⁰⁷ Keizō Obuchi, May 13, 1998, Debate at the House of Representatives, Diet of Japan: http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_kaigiroku.nsf/html/kaigiroku/0005_1.htm

⁴⁰⁸ Akira Amari, October 25, 2006, Debate at the House of Representatives, Diet of Japan: http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_kaigiroku.nsf/html/kaigiroku/0005_1.htm

⁴⁰⁹ Yoshiko Sakurai, *Shokun!*, August 2003, p. 51

option, pointed out in the magazine that the extended deterrence provided by the U.S. would always remain unreliable.⁴¹⁰ On the other hand, other experts, like Professor Hiroshi Nakanishi of Kyōto University, advised against acquiring nuclear weapons, emphasizing that such a decision would in fact produce more costs than benefits for Japan.⁴¹¹ Astrophysicist Satoru Ikeuchi also commented, “demilitarization and promotion of culture, rather than nuclearization, are proof that a nation wants to survive.”⁴¹² Nonetheless, most of the authors, shared the view that there was no harm in discussing a nuclear option; Hideo Hosoi, editor in chief of *Shokun!*, also noted, “[i]f people had voiced such opinions a few years ago, they would have been branded ‘weirdos’. We’re starting to be able to talk about it in a rational and normal way.”⁴¹³

The August 2003 edition of *Shokun!* is the first magazine that featured a whole section on the nuclear debate, but it was not the first time that Japanese press dedicated a space for the topic. In fact, as of May 31, 2016, it is possible to count 571 Japanese articles appeared in political, science, technology, and economic magazines that mention or debate Japan’s nuclear option.⁴¹⁴

The new characteristic of the widening of the nuclear debate in 2002 is therefore certainly not a change in Japan’s nuclear policy, or a growing tolerance vis-à-vis these statements. Their increasingly public nature, as well as public opinion’s budding interest in security issues, are a new trait of the 21st century’s nuclear debate. Rather than a break

⁴¹⁰ Terumasa Nakanishi, “Nihonkoku Kakubusō he no Ketsudan” [Decision to Arm Japan with Nuclear Weapons], *Shokun!*, August 2003, p. 22-37

⁴¹¹ Hiroshi Nakanishi, *Shokun!*, August 2003, p. 60

⁴¹² Satoru Ikeuchi, *Shokun!*, August 2003, p. 95

⁴¹³ *Washington Times*, “Japan Rethinks Nuclear Taboo”, August 15, 2003

⁴¹⁴ Author’s research at the National Diet Library, Tokyo, spring 2016

from the past, Japanese elites' effective behavior suggests a continuity in their thinking. It would therefore be more correct to talk of a renaissance of the nuclear debate, rather than an erosion of the nuclear taboo. The most noteworthy shift is, in fact, the government's repeated statements that the strength of Japan's nuclear policy lies in the twist that despite having nuclear latency, Japan does not choose to go nuclear.

4.2 *The Security Identity Dilemma*

As mentioned in the previous section, this rhetorical shift in the late 1990s and its consolidation after 2002 seems to have exploded at the same time of the second North Korean nuclear crisis. The timing of Japan's renewed and more provocative nuclear narrative seems to naturally imply that Japanese elites were responding to the North Korean aggressive nuclear posture by attempting to deter the North Korean and the Chinese perceived threats.

For instance, on April 6, 2002, Ichirō Ozawa, at the time leader of the Liberal Party, made a controversial statement at a conference in Fukuoka. Ozawa was quoted saying, "it would be very easy for us to produce nuclear warheads. We have enough plutonium in our nuclear plants to make several thousands of them."⁴¹⁵ He then mentioned China's military buildup, commenting, "If China gets too inflated, the Japanese people will get hysterical."⁴¹⁶ Predictably, the Chinese government harshly condemned Ozawa's words, labeling them as "provocative and representing an outdated Cold War mentality."⁴¹⁷ Brian

⁴¹⁵ *Kyōdō News*, "Ozawa remarks draw int'l criticism of Japan", April 9, 2002; *The Guardian*, "Japan 'could build 7000 nuclear bombs'", April 8, 2002

⁴¹⁶ *Reuters*, "Japanese nukes could counter China – politician", April 6, 2002; *The Guardian*, "Japan 'could build 7000 nuclear bombs'", April 8, 2002; *Kyōdō News*, "Ozawa Defends Remarks on Japan as Nuclear Power", April 7, 2002; *Kyōdō News*, "Ozawa Remarks draw int'l criticism of Japan", April 9, 2002 (some of these articles are available on the site of the Nuclear Control Institute: <http://www.nci.org/02NCI/04/japan-articles.htm>)

⁴¹⁷ John de Boer, "Reaction to Ozawa's statement on Japan's Nuclear Capability", Japanese Institute of

Bremner, writing from Tokyo for *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, reported that “not much” had happened in Japan following Ozawa’s speech, and commented that, in fact, it was “refreshing to hear a Japanese leader speak in very stark terms about the country’s national security interests.”⁴¹⁸ In response to Ozawa’s remarks and the aforementioned statements by Abe, Fukuda, and Koizumi; Shingo Nishimura, who had resigned from the Defense Agency in 1999 but was still a lawmaker in 2002, commented on the new willingness of the Japanese to finally debate the nuclear issue: “people are clearly waking up to the idea. They feel something is wrong with Japan.”⁴¹⁹ It is significant that Nishimura’s comment seems to attack Japan’s established postwar pacifist identity, rather than focusing on the looming external threat. The notion of national identity, broadly defined, is indeed at the heart of the issue of Japan’s nuclear policy. Japan’s complex and multilayered nuclear policy has been heavily influenced by the way Japan has been seeing its political role at the international level in the postwar world. The shift in the nuclear debate therefore reveals a frantic quest for a more defined identity in the new multipolar world, and a practical reaction to the realization that a new identity cannot be found overnight. The shift in the nuclear debate, indeed, is not only a consequence of the way the government has perceived Japan’s position in the postwar era, but is also the result of the way the U.S.-Japan relationship evolved since the late 1980s.

The shocking defeat in 1945 had obviously already had a first deep impact on Japan’s national identity. The emperor’s first radio address on August 15, 1945, as well as

Global Communications, April 15, 2002

⁴¹⁸ Brian Bremner, “A Japanese Nuke: No longer unthinkable”, *Bloomberg Business Week*, April 11, 2002 (the article is available at: <http://www.businessweek.com/stories/2002-04-09/a-japanese-nuke-no-longer-unthinkable>)

⁴¹⁹ *Associated Press*, “Building Atomic Arsenal on Japan’s Mind”, August 9, 2003

his Humanity Declaration on January 1, 1946 were immensely confusing for the Japanese people as a whole, who were stripped of their sole purpose in their lives. The perception of having lost a purpose and a divinity instantly made Japan an extremely vulnerable and unstable country, and the U.S.-Japan alliance quickly became the most vital pillar of Japan's postwar foreign and security policy. However, the end of the Cold War came, and despite having made a remarkable economic recovery and found political stability, Japan seemed to be back to square one. In fact, the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought about another major change in Japan's role, freeing the country from the bipolar strategic constraints of the Cold War. While throughout the Cold War, Japan served as a crucial ally for the United States in Northeast Asia, after the main rival of the United States disappeared, Japan found itself in a state of deep disorientation, questioning for the first time since 1945 its role as an international actor.

The issue of Japan's identity was first explicitly introduced into the Western IR literature in the mid-1990s, when Thomas Berger, Nobuo Okawara, and Peter J. Katzenstein drew attention to the concept of political culture and identity of Japan. Their norm constructivist approach, indeed, focuses on how Japan's domestic factors construct a certain type of identity, and how that influences the country's foreign policy, as opposed to the 'relational' approach, which studies the way a country constructs itself in relation to others. Their work was published at a timely era, when Japan was trying to adjust to the new world order after the Cold War came to an end. Challenging the view that Japan is an economic superpower that would someday grow into a political and military one as well, these authors extensively analyzed what they have called "peaceful cultural norms" and

“anti-militarist culture,” and have attributed to Japan a “pacifist” and “anti-militarist” identity,⁴²⁰ emphasizing the well-rooted and stable nature of this characteristic. Andrew Oros has an interesting phrase to describe Japan’s postwar behavioral pattern: Reach, Reconcile, Reassure. Oros explains that up until the late 1990s, a Japanese policymaker would reach past the security identity to do something beyond what one would expect, followed by a severe public outcry about it. The policymaker then tries to reconcile the new policy with its postwar security identity itself. Once this reconciliation is made, the public is again reassured.⁴²¹ In fact, Akira Amari’s explanation at the Diet on Japan’s exceptional nuclear credibility, mentioned in the previous section, is an example of that sort of adjustment attempt of the national nuclear policy.



The Seattle Times, 1985

Moreover, once the Cold War came to an end, Japan’s international role and its role within the U.S.-Japan alliance started to be less taken for granted, and her reactive foreign policy had to be reassessed. Not only its place on a global level was uncertain, but also its

⁴²⁰ Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, Columbia University Press, 1996; Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, “Japan’s National Security: Structures, Norms, and Policies”, *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Spring 1993); Thomas U. Berger, “From Sword to Chrysanthemum”, *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Spring 1993)

⁴²¹ Andrew Oros, *Normalizing Japan: Politics, Identity, and the Evolution of Security Practice*, Studies in Asian Security, Stanford University Press, 2008, Chapter I

relationship with the United States was souring in some aspects, which had consequences in a delicate transitional moment for Japan. The phrase “Japan bashing” was born in the late 1980s to refer to the sudden widespread Japanophobia in the United States with regards to the assertion that Japan was not behaving as a fair trading partner. Cartoons describing these feelings appeared in magazines and newspapers, depicting Japan as a fat but clever samurai that was kindly cheating Uncle Sam or President Ronald Reagan with a katana sword. The United States seemed too focused on the problems in their economic relationship to notice Japan’s identity dilemma was a mixture of political and security issues.

During his Premiership in the late 1980s, Yasuhiro Nakasone emphasized the glaring gap between Japan’s and her ally’s statuses, stating that while the United States were “at university” in defense matters, Japan was “still in kindergarten.”⁴²² This feeling was widely echoed in the early 1990s



The Orlando Sentinel, 1985

by Ichirō Ozawa, who in his *Blueprint for a New Japan: the Rethinking of a Nation* (1993),

⁴²² *AP News*, “Nakasone says Japan must do more in Defense”, December 29, 1985; *Schenectady Gazette*, December 27 1985; *Toledo Blade Ohio*, “Nakasone wants Japan to boost its security role”, December 30, 1985

claimed that Japan could not stay a “political dwarf” any longer.⁴²³ Many among the former Japanese officials whom I interviewed in the spring 2016 have agreed that the elites have always considered Japan as a country that had not fully grown, an “underage country.”⁴²⁴

The Japanophobia of the early 1990s was very real and tangible. Journalist Bill Emmott mentions the 1992 best-seller novel *Rising Sun* by Michael Crichton and comments that “the view put forward in that book, and echoed elsewhere, has been absorbed by more Americans than any piece of business writing about the subject.”⁴²⁵ Although conceding that there certainly are influential figures in the United States who do not agree with the view held by Crichton that Japanese firms and investments constitute a threat to the United States, Emmott argues that eventually, it is the popular view that prevails. In fact, the August 6, 1994 issue of *The Economist* notes that the numerous opinion polls on American attitudes towards Japan reveal a “remarkably vivid and consistent pattern: a steady decline over the past ten years in American trust and friendliness towards Japan.”⁴²⁶ The widespread American hysteria over Japanese trade was indeed taking concrete measures: after a very tense meeting in January 1992 between the chief executives of General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler on the one hand, and Toyota, Nissan, Honda, Mitsubishi, and Mazda on the other, Lee A. Iacocca of the Chrysler Corporation warned that Congress was only steps away from enacting limits on the import and production of Japanese cars in the United States,⁴²⁷ an element that Bill Clinton had included in his presidential campaign in view of the November 1992 elections. Emmott

⁴²³ Ichirō Ozawa, *Nippon Kaizō Keikaku*, (Blueprint for a New Japan: the rethinking of a Nation), Kōdansha, 1993, p. 89

⁴²⁴ Interviews by the author, March-May 2016

⁴²⁵ Bill Emmott, *Japanophobia*, Crown, 1993, p. 9

⁴²⁶ *The Economist*, “The fading of Japanophobia,” August 6, 1994

⁴²⁷ *The New York Times*, “Bush in Japan; A Trade Mission Ends in Tension As the ‘Big Eight’ of Autos Meet,” January 10, 1992

also explains the anti-Japanese sentiment felt by many Americans in the early 1990s with a peculiar historical parallel. When American GIs came to Britain in World War II, the British resented them, and the Americans were treated as suspicion and mistrust: “[t]he trouble with Americans, it was said, was that they were ‘Overpaid, Oversexed, and Over here.’ (...) It is the same today for Japan and Japanese business. Japanese competition has been around for years. But until the second half of the 1980s it was rather remote, operating from an island archipelago thousands of miles across the Pacific. (...) Now, however, things are different. Suddenly and dramatically, Japan and Japanese business are not somewhere far away. They are in the next town, village or city, employing local workers, buying local goods and services, contributing to local political funds, charities, museums, and other community groups.”⁴²⁸ The “over here” part of the British saying rang particularly true in the case of the Japanese. Although Japan had aimed at internationalization since the Meiji era and succeeded in it, the only social group that had been to the United States or to Europe were a few elites, and especially the political elites, who met with their foreign counterparts without having any perceived impact on the general public. The same was true for Americans: although more and more Americans (and Westerners in general) had started to visit Japan since the end of World War II, they were mainly political, military, and diplomatic envoys. Foreigners were still very rare in Japan, even in the early 1990s. The blooming of the business sector in Japan since the mid-1980s thus had a great impact on ordinary people as the Japanese products were starting to insistently dominate the American market. As Emmott puts it, Japan was starting to behave like the United States in the trade world: “intensely parochial, but now ineluctably engaged

⁴²⁸ Bill Emmott, *op. cit.*, p. 19-20

in the world.”⁴²⁹

This American resentment over Japanese behavior in the business world was simultaneously exacerbated by the First Gulf War in 1990-1991. The crisis indeed showcased how poorly Japan could perform in international security crises. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the United States pressured Toshiki Kaifu’s government to join the international effort to solve the crisis by deploying military personnel and provide funding. At the time, the Kaifu government was split between pragmatists and revisionists. The former followed the transactional idea that national interests are calculated based on costs and benefits, thus aligning themselves with a pro-American strategy and relying on the United States for Japanese security issues. The latter, on the other hand, favored the idea of a Constitutional revision and in particular of Article 9, which in their view limited Japan’s military projection capabilities. The revisionists, whose leader was Ichirō Ozawa, Secretary-General of the LDP, considered Article 9 as an American imposition and pushed for an autonomous Japanese strategic identity.⁴³⁰

Prime Minister Kaifu was a pragmatist, but since he was the leader of a small faction, he also needed the support of the revisionists in order for the government to survive. That is why the revisionists, and especially Ozawa, were the ones to respond to the U.S. pressures to join the international effort.⁴³¹ Initially, Ozawa and his allies proposed a draft of the United Nations Peace Cooperation Corps (UNPCC), which required a lightly-armed small contingent to send to the Gulf region. Their task would be to monitor the cease-fire

⁴²⁹ Ibid., p. 21

⁴³⁰ J. Patrick Boyd and Richard Samuels, “Nine Lives? The Politics of Constitutional Reform in Japan”, East West Center Washington, 2005, pp.27-28: <https://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/nine-lives-politics-constitutional-reform-japan>

⁴³¹ Courtney Purrington, “Tokyo’s Policy Responses During the Gulf Crisis”, in *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 1991, pp. 307-323: <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2645386?uid=3738296&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21103450466541>

and provide medical and logistic support.⁴³² The draft also included another bill that promoted a new constitutional interpretation: according to this view, the foreign deployment of the SDF, if under the UN umbrella, could be compatible with the Constitution, even if the mission required use of force.⁴³³ The pacifists of the JSP and the Komeito, however, joined the pragmatists of the LPD and opposed the new constitutional interpretation proposed by Ozawa. A fiery and chaotic debate at the Diet ensued, and several Dietmen offered contradictory statements and explanations on the hypothetical activities carried out by the Japanese troops and on the reinterpretation of Article 9.⁴³⁴

Moreover, the Cabinet Legislation Bureau, the agency in charge of advising the Cabinet Members on drafting legislation to be proposed to the Diet, was not capable of offering concrete examples of cases in which weapon transportation could be considered legal under the Constitution.⁴³⁵ These circumstances prompted the Director General of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau to backtrack and declare that many doubts lingered on the constitutionality of the SDF's participation.⁴³⁶ Ozawa, in turn, was forced to withdraw the draft before the Diet could even start the vote, and suggested the government participated in the crisis solving by contributing with an elevated funding. That is how the government of Japan came to support the Gulf mission by contributing with USD 13 billion.⁴³⁷

In November 1991, however, Secretary of State James A. Baker stated during a

⁴³² Sadao Hirano, *Ozawa Ichirō to no nijū nen* (Twenty Years with Ichirō Oawa), Tokyo, Purejidentosha, 1996, pp. 36-39; J. Patrick Boyd and Richard Samuels, *ibid.*

⁴³³ J. Patrick Boyd and Richard Samuels, *ibid.*

⁴³⁴ Atsushi Odawara, "The Kaifu Bungle", *Japan Quarterly* 38, (January-March), 1991, pp. 6-14: <http://hufind.huji.ac.il/Record/HUJ001279926>; J. Patrick Boyd e Richard Samuels, *ibid.*

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, "When Cash Alone Won't Carry: Japan's Kaifu proposes significant departure from checkbook diplomacy", April 28, 1991; Marius B. Jansen, *Japan and Its World: Two Centuries of Change*, Princeton University Press, 1996, .p XV; Ellis S. Kraus and T. J. Pempel, *Beyond Bilateralism: US-Japan Relations in the New Asia-Pacific*, Stanford University Press, 2003, p. 30, p. 67

speech at the Japan Institute of International Affairs that “[w]e recognize that Japan's leaders, and its people, are now grappling with a difficult adjustment in Japan's world role,” “...Your 'checkbook diplomacy,' like our 'dollar diplomacy' of an earlier era, is clearly too narrow.”⁴³⁸ Japan was therefore being bashed for being a “security free-rider.”⁴³⁹

The labeling of such a difficult decision by the Japanese government as “checkbook diplomacy,” was too much of a humiliation for Tokyo. Moreover, the military operations of the international coalition in Iraq started at 3 AM local time on January 17, 1991, but the Japanese Ambassador in Washington, D.C., Ryōhei Murata, was notified by Secretary Baker only 30 minutes beforehand.⁴⁴⁰ The coup de grâce arrived in March 1991 when the Kuwait government published a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* and other newspapers thanking the UN coalition for liberating its country. The ad listed and thanked dozens of countries, but Japan was not among them.⁴⁴¹

Ozawa, among other Japanese politicians, was particularly shaken by the harsh and irritated criticism coming from their ally. He took this opportunity to turn the widespread mortified feeling of the Japanese public to open the debate on the possibility of transforming Japan into a “normal nation” (*futsū no kuni*). According to Ozawa, “normal” meant first of all reexamining and redefining the constitutional limits that prevented Japan to take part into solving international crises. Further, in view of Japan’s candidacy to earn

⁴³⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, “Baker Tells Japan: take Global Role - move beyond “checkbook diplomacy”, he advises in policy speech, and assume political responsibilities”, November 11, 1991; *The New York Times*, “Baker Asks Japan to Broaden Role”, November 12, 1991

⁴³⁹ See Shafiqul Islam, “Foreign Aid and Burdensharing: Is Japan Free Riding to a Coprosperity Sphere in Pacific Asia?” in *Regionalism and Rivalry: Japan and the United States in Pacific Asia*, January 1993, p. 321-390

⁴⁴⁰ Hiroshi Nakanishi, “The Gulf War and Japanese Diplomacy”, June 12, 2011: <http://www.nippon.com/en/features/c00202>

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

a permanent seat at the UN Security Council, Ozawa also argued that Japan could not sit still and let other states assume all responsibility by themselves on important issues such as global security and peace keeping.⁴⁴²



Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki (R) and Minister of Finances Ryūtarō Hashimoto celebrate when the plan to finance the mission in the Gulf War was approved in the Diet, February 28, 1991

As Jeff Kingston observes, Ozawa's statements resonate with Yasuhiro Nakasone's views expressed in the 1980s.⁴⁴³ Nakasone, after all, was a pioneer in defying the postwar taboos as he promoted

the ideas of healthy nationalism and internationalism. Nakasone also greatly emphasized the SDF, and had the plan to expand their role in the context of his “nationalist-internationalist” project. His motivation for expanding Japan's national defense was, in fact, the fair balance of what he called “just, healthy nationalism” (*tadashii minzokushugi*) and “just, healthy internationalism” (*tadashii kokusaishugi*). Nakasone clarified these notions during an LPD seminar in Karuizawa in August 1987: “Japan requires to reflect on the relationship between healthy nationalism and healthy internationalism. (...) To put it simply, healthy nationalism is when a race or group of people who share a common destiny are fully aware that they do. They make every effort to enable the country to grow and

⁴⁴² Jeff Kingston, *Japan in Transformation, 1952-2000*, Longman, 2001, p. 63

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

thrive politically, economically, and culturally. It happens when they have their own identity, or sense of self, in the world politically, economically, culturally, and otherwise, and cooperate in order to contribute to that identity. Without this, there is no way that a nation will be able to stand on its own two feet.”⁴⁴⁴ In his speech, Nakasone further stresses the importance of the role of the people (*minzoku*)’s will by illustrating his argument with the example of postwar recovery: “when Japan lost the war, it seemed like all the values we believed in were rejected and crushed. Then we stood in the middle of the ruins, and pondered how to make Japan stand on its feet again. That is when the notion of healthy nationalism came in handy, and we combined it with new values such as democracy, pacifism, international cooperation – all new values that we lacked, and that combination succeeded in building the postwar Japan that we are familiar with. In any case, it is the people who has the power to decide and act.”⁴⁴⁵

As Secretary Baker put it, it was certain that the Gulf War represented a watershed event in Japan’s foreign and defense policy.⁴⁴⁶ Japanese politics were in turmoil as the Cold War ended, and the revisionists, also supported by conservative media, accused the pragmatists and pacifists of not thinking of the new responsibilities that Japan had to face vis-à-vis the international community. The revisionists started to gain ground for the first time, and this momentum prompted the Diet to approve a new law in June 1992; the draft Act on Cooperation for United Nations Peace-Keeping Operations, which allowed the deployment of the SDF in peace-keeping operations.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁴ Nakasone Yasuhiro, *Watashi no Seiji Shinjō* (My Political Philosophy), LPD, Tokyo, 1987, p.10: <http://worldjpn.grips.ac.jp/documents/texts/exdpm/19870829.S1J.html>

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ *The New York Times*, “Baker Asks Japan to Broaden Role”, November 12, 1991

⁴⁴⁷ The main points of the draft Act are available at: http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2013/_src/sc327/cp3_sf1.txt

Moreover, another phrase mocking Japan, “Japan passing”, was used in the mid-to-late 1990s, and referred to the deep anxiety that Japan felt vis-à-vis her ally, the United States. Japan felt the weight and the political limitations of her status as second global economic power, and because many other countries in Asia were growing, Japan feared a security abandonment by the United States. An example of “Japan passing”⁴⁴⁸ could be President Bill Clinton’s visit to Asia in 1998, where he visited Beijing for nine days without stopping by the United States’ closest friend and ally, their “unsinkable aircraft carrier,”⁴⁴⁹ Japan.

In fact, despite the Gulf War being a promising watershed event for Japan’s foreign and defense policy, it also showed that Japan was not ready to implement the project of normalization. While, on the one hand, encouraging Japan to step up and acquire a more proactive stance, on the other hand Washington made sure to take this opportunity to strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance. The State Department documents declassified in December 2005 show in fact that, following the debacle of Japan’s checkbook diplomacy, the United States took advantage of Japan’s distress and attempted to influence and direct Japan’s politics.⁴⁵⁰ In a March 14, 1991 telegram to the State Department, U.S. Ambassador to Tokyo Michael Armacost wrote that the Japanese government had taken an “essentially passive approach” to the Gulf War.⁴⁵¹ Armacost then reports the debate on Japan’s post-Cold War role started because of the Gulf War, and analyzes that “no

⁴⁴⁸ For further reading, see Takahashi Kōsuke, *Asia Times*, “Geithner a balm for Japan’s Clinton Trauma”, 26 novembre 2008

⁴⁴⁹ The term was used by Yasuhiro Nakasone in 1983, when he pledged that Japan would be its ally’s “unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Pacific”

⁴⁵⁰ The National Security Archive, US-Japan Relations Declassified (1977-1992), declassified on December 14, 2005; *Kyōdō News*, December 18, 2005

⁴⁵¹ Telegram from Michael Armacost to the State Department, March 14, 1991 on the impact of the Gulf War on the US-Japan relations, The National Security Archive, US-Japan Relations Declassified (1977-1992).

conclusions were reached, but the obstacles to a mature foreign policy were highlighted, including enduring pacifist sentiment and distrust of the Japanese military, the gap between the desire for recognition as a great power and willingness to bear the associated risks and responsibilities.”⁴⁵² The Ambassador further describes the impact the event has had on U.S.-Japan relations and assures that the “American success reaffirmed Japanese confidence in our strategic alliance, but ‘bashing’ has left some scares. More importantly, there is a growing theme here that America’s welcomed self-confidence may develop into arrogance directed against Japan. In pursuing our interests here, we have the opportunity to take advantage of Japan’s defensiveness and fear of isolation in the wake of the Gulf Crisis to gain greater GOJ cooperation.” Armacost concludes with a warning to avoid confrontational behavior that may eventually cause backlash.⁴⁵³ The “scares” that the Ambassador refers to, as mentioned earlier, were only going to grow in the following years due to the trade problem, thus creating more tensions in the US-Japan relationship.

One of the main reasons why Japan could not bounce back quickly from her early 1990s uncertainty was a severe lack of academic experts in the security field. Throughout the Cold War, international security studies remained underdeveloped in Japan with no universities offering security studies programs.⁴⁵⁴ The end of the Cold War led a growing number of Japanese scholars to study security issues because Japan was expected to play a more proactive role in the new era and, as Akio Watanabe points out, because security was no longer perceived as “dangerous” by Japanese intellectuals.⁴⁵⁵ As mentioned earlier, the

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Author’s interview with Michiru Nishida, Special Advisor for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Policy, MOFA, February 8, 2018; Author’s interview with Heigo Sato and Takashi Kawakami, Takushoku University, February 19, 2018 and March 19, 2018;

⁴⁵⁵ Akio Watanabe, “The State of Japanese Research and Education in International Political Economy and International Security Studies” in “Survey on US-Japan Security Studies and International Economics, Key

early 1990s saw for the first time the emergence of the notion of “normal nation”, prompting the Japanese political debate to reflect on the necessity to reform the postwar foreign and defense policy of the country.⁴⁵⁶ The transitional decade from 1991 to 2001 made it difficult for Japan to gain a deep knowledge in security issues in time for the turn of the century.⁴⁵⁷ In the early 1990s, indeed, the Japanese government was divided into two main factions: the pragmatists and the revisionists. The former believed that national interests were to be calculated only in terms of costs and benefits, which made them strong supporters of the U.S.-Japan alliance. The latter believed that the first step towards a normal Japan was a revision of the country’s pacifist constitution, specifically of Article 9, which limited Japan’s military capabilities.⁴⁵⁸ The existence of the two camps and two different ideas for Japan, therefore, turned the first decade that followed the end of the Cold War into a precarious and politically unstable moment for Japan.

Considering this deep anxiety and political instability Japan was coming from, it is indeed more natural to think of Ozawa’s April 2002 comments not as an exhortation to go nuclear, but as a message directed to the United States. The public nuclear narrative explosion started in 2002 seems like a way to draw the senior ally’s attention in order to remind the United States to honor their security commitments toward Japan, because of Japan’s lack of choice. The same Ichirō Ozawa, who now leads the Liberal Party, said indeed in a July 2013 interview that he completely rules out nuclear weapons as a valuable

Findings”, The National Bureau of Asian Research, November 2001

⁴⁵⁶ For further reading on a “normal” Japan, see Yoshihide Soeya, *Japan as a normal country? A nation in search of its place in the world*, University of Toronto Press, 2011

⁴⁵⁷ Author’s interview with Admiral Tomohisa Takei, US Naval War College, May 3, 2018

⁴⁵⁸ According to Article 9 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.

option for Japan.⁴⁵⁹ The North Korean and Chinese threats may therefore have had an indirect impact on Japanese nuclear hedging stance, but it is relevant to note that its “political dwarf” position did not leave any choice for Japan but to eventually strengthen the security alliance with the United States. Although some statements might sound bold, this proliferation of nuclear comments by Japanese elites, which stemmed from an unclear post-Cold War identity, are a sign that Japan was not ready to leave its status of reactive state that was so comfortable and convenient during the Cold War. While some of the provocative nuclear statements might serve as a deterrent narrative towards China and North Korea, they may especially be a sign of Japan’s weakness and fear of abandonment, which would then translate into an expression of their desire for continuity and stability of the Cold War security arrangement with the United States.

Another sign that deterring North Korea’s nuclear threat was not at the forefront of Japanese leaders’ calculations is the nature of the quiet negotiations between the Koizumi government and Pyongyang. In September 2001, Kim Jong-Il’s special envoy and Director of the Asia-Pacific Bureau at MOFA Hitoshi Tanaka engaged in a series of twenty meetings as groundwork for the normalization of the Japan-DPRK relations. Keiji Hiramatsu, Director of the Northeast Asian Affairs, who was aware of the meetings, recommended that Tanaka “break the traditional pattern of Japan-DPRK negotiations.”⁴⁶⁰ Journalist Yōichi Funabashi interviewed Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda, who stated that the main motivation behind the secret negotiations with Pyongyang was in fact domestic, i.e. a

⁴⁵⁹ Ichirō Ozawa, *Independent Web Journal*, July 12, 2013; the video version of the interview is available on the *Independent Web Journal*’s Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9-bfY38Ek>

⁴⁶⁰ Yōichi Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis*, Brookings Institution Press, 2007, p. 67-69

credibility boost for the MOFA within Japan. In the last few months, indeed, the Ministry was at the heart of several scandals, and many within the organization were critical towards Minister Makiko Tanaka, who was deemed “too authoritarian.”⁴⁶¹ Fukuda is quoted saying:

Looking around, Japan’s foreign relations were deadlocked everywhere. The stalemate situations included the Takeshima Island issue with the Republic of Korea, the rise of China and the feud with China over Yasukuni Shrine, the Northern Territories issue with Russia, and on and on and on. That’s why I wanted to advance the normalization of relations with North Korea, which would provide Japan with a great opportunity to contribute to the stability of Northeast Asia. I believe that the prime minister’s visit to Pyongyang made the Japanese feel that something was moving and Japan might be overcoming its deadlock with North Korea.⁴⁶²

The NHK broadcasted a documentary titled “Hiroku Nicchō Kōshō – Shirarezaru “Kaku” no Kōbō” (“The Secret Report: the secret negotiations between Japan and North Korea over the nuclear question”) on November 8, 2009, reconstructing the negotiations and the two meetings between Jun’ichirō Koizumi and Kim Jong-Il in 2002 and 2004. However, we can note that the actual nuclear question was not the most urgent one for Japan. As Anthony DiFilippo notes, it would have been a political suicide for any Japanese politician to ignore the abduction issue by the year 2000. According to a survey conducted by the Cabinet, 68% of the respondents had selected the abduction issue as the most urgent one, 52% had indicated the North Korean missile program as their primary concern, and only 39% were worried about the North Korean nuclear program.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., p. 68

⁴⁶² Ibid., p. 69

⁴⁶³ Survey cited by Yōichi Funabashi in op. cit., p. 64-65 and by Anthony DiFilippo, “Still At Odds: The Japanese Abduction Issue and North Korea’s Circumvention”, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, May

During the Japan-North Korea normalization talks, on October 29, 2002, for example, the DPRK threatened to break the missile moratorium. The news was completely ignored by the Japanese media, who continued to focus solely on the abduction issue. The DPRK, frustrated by the lack of attention, made the same threat the following day, but the Japanese media ignored it again, which in turn frustrated some MOFA officials, who complained about the public's lack of attention in security matters.⁴⁶⁴

These instances highlight the differences in perception between the government and the public, discrepancies even within the government, and an inevitable lack of resources regards to defense matters. Further, in the wake of the 2006 North Korean nuclear test, and even after Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had visited Tokyo and publicly reassured Japan of the solidity of the extended nuclear deterrence provided to Japan by the United States in October 2006, more Japanese politicians felt the need to test the alliance. Shōichi Nakagawa, for instance, at the time policy chief of the LDP, stated in a television appearance in November 2006 that Japan should at least discuss the nuclear option because North Korean nuclear-tipped missiles could reach Japan before the U.S. could help their ally.⁴⁶⁵ Foreign Minister Tarō Asō also sparked a controversy⁴⁶⁶ as he offered his support to Nakagawa's statements and called for a more open debate on the nuclear option because of the threatening environment.⁴⁶⁷ These statements are a sign that, despite coming to the

2013, p. 140; for a good analysis of the abduction issue on Japanese domestic politics from the end of the 1990s up until the Koizumi government, see Eric Johnston, "The North Korea Abduction Issue and Its Effect on Japanese Domestic Politics", Japan Policy Research Institute, #101, June 2004: <http://www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp101.html>

⁴⁶⁴ Katsuhisa Furukawa, "Japan's Future Strategic Options and the US-Japan Alliance", in *Japan's Nuclear Option – Security, Politics, and Policy in the 21st Century*, Self & Thompson, 2003, p. 113

⁴⁶⁵ Reuters, "INTERVIEW-Japan policy chief wants China 'discipline'", November 13, 2006

⁴⁶⁶ See October 2006 opinion poll by *Asahi Shimbun* mentioned on p. 1

⁴⁶⁷ *Kyōdō News*, "LDP Official to Ask Aso, Nakagawa to Refrain from Nuke Weapon Talk", November 5, 2006; *Asia Times*, "Japanese Nukes: Voicing the Unthinkable", November 16, 2006; *Kyōdō News*, "Aso says discussion of possessing nuclear weapons 'important'", October 18, 2006; House of Representatives, Diet of

conclusion that the only possible security option at the moment is strengthening the alliance with the United States, Japan could not fully and completely rely on its ally for protection. This lingering and underlying mistrust towards the United States, fomented since the late 1980s by the bitter feelings of Japan bashing and Japan passing, is a leitmotiv in the U.S.-Japan security alliance that can be found in more recent years as well. When Prime Minister Shinzō Abe and Adm. Harry Harris, commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, met in Tokyo after North Korea's nuclear test in January 2016 and a ballistic missile launch in February, Abe stated that "[t]he missile launch by North Korea was not only a direct threat to Japan but also a challenge to the United States."⁴⁶⁸ Political scientist Shōgo Imoto writes on the political blog *Agora*, "it is clearly an exaggeration to state that Mr. Abe is thinking of nuclear weapons for Japan. However, I interpret [Mr. Abe's quote] as the following: 'If the United States abandons Japan now and runs away from the North Korean threat, Japan will seriously consider a shift in its policy and acquire nuclear weapons. I would like you to be fully aware of this as you tackle the North Korean issue.'⁴⁶⁹

The new awareness for a public nuclear discussion by Japanese politicians is therefore not only closely linked to the quest for a new identity, but the level of mistrust towards the United States. The lingering mistrust towards their ally, in fact, not only indicates a fear of being abandoned by the United States, but also a low level of confidence in successfully building a renewed and more proactive identity. This element of mistrust towards the United States, combined with their dislike of neighboring Asian countries,

Japan: http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_kaigirokua.nsf/html/kaigirokua/009816520061025002.htm

⁴⁶⁸ See for example *Japan Times*, "Japan, US vow to step up defense ties over North Korean provocation," February 16, 2016: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/02/16/national/japan-u-s-vow-step-defense-ties-north-korean-provocation/#.WPU3CYgrLIV>

⁴⁶⁹ Shōgo Imoto, "Usureru Kakubusō no tabū" [The eroding nuclear taboo], *Agora*, February 17, 2016: <http://agora-web.jp/archives/1670228.html>

however, has always been a central argument of the most conservative fringes of Japanese politics, who use it as a valid reason to lobby for a shift in the country's nuclear policy.

4.3 *Neo-Nationalism and Nuclear Weapons*

At the same time of the opening of the nuclear discussion at the turn of the 21st century, Japan also experienced a rise of nationalism.⁴⁷⁰ A number of fringe conservative politicians and their followers, in fact, have been seeing the nuclear debate as an excellent opportunity to prepare the ground for accustoming the public opinion to a nuclear future for Japan. In other words, the advocates of a nuclear option are using the current strategic instability in East Asia to try to appeal to the public sense of strategic vulnerability in order to justify the acquisition of nuclear weapons. The publication in 2007 of the booklet *Bokura no kakubusō-ron – tabū chō toppa! Ima dakara ronjiru. Kangaeru* [Our own nuclear debate – piercing the taboo! We need to think and debate about it now] edited by journalist Kōyū Nishimura is an example of how the idea of widening the nuclear option debate in Japan meets a call for a new independent identity and the urgency to act now because of a threatening environment: according to the booklet, Japan should consider the nuclear option not in spite, but precisely because of its status as a *hibakukoku*.

On April 16, 2013, the same Shingo Nishimura who had to resign from the Defense Agency in 1999 for his disturbing remarks, stated during a session at the Diet that Japan needed to finally realize the project of acquiring nuclear weapons because “while everyone in Japan

⁴⁷⁰ Takeshi Sasaki, “A New Era of Nationalism?” *Journal of Japanese Trade and Industry* 20/1, 2001, pp. 8-11; Shin’ichi Kitaoka, “Is Nationalism Intensifying in Japan?” *Journal of Japanese Trade and Industry* 20/1 (January 1, 2001); Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Kazuhiko Tōgō, *East Asia’s Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism*, Westport: Praeger, 2008

is fussing over our nuclear energy program, no one is actually thinking of Japan's defense," while, at the same time, bizarrely interpreting Prime Minister Abe's electoral slogan, "Nippon wo torimodosu,"⁴⁷¹ as a call to bring back the pre-war Meiji Emperor national holidays.⁴⁷²

Conservative journalist and member of the nationalist group Nippon Kaigi Yoshiko Sakurai, has also been voicing her opinion on a domestic nuclear option in a consistent and rather provocative fashion: on August 6, 2015, on the anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, she organized an event at a hotel in Hiroshima that condemns the "failure of 70 years of a non-nuclear Japan", claiming in the flyer that Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution failed to prevent the Chinese military buildup or the North Korean nuclear program.⁴⁷³

Another noteworthy phenomenon is the emergence of street demonstrations favoring the Japanese nuclear option. On August 6, 2013, on the very same day of the anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, Zaitokukai,⁴⁷⁴ a nationalist group founded in 2006, marched through the streets of Tokyo and Hiroshima to call for an indigenous nuclear arsenal. Interviewed during the demonstrations, Makoto Sakurai, who leads the group,

⁴⁷¹ "Nippon wo, torimodosu" can either mean "restore/rebuild Japan", or "let's take Japan back." While the former interpretation clearly refers to the country's stagnating economy, the latter strongly hints at the idea of drifting away from the postwar security system.

⁴⁷² The video of Nishimura's statement at the Diet can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvjloZ5YmxY>; the double interpretation of the slogan will be discussed later in this work

⁴⁷³ *Sankei News*, "9 jō de sensō yandaka – Nihon kaigi '8.6 Hiroshima Heiwa Meeting' de Sakurai Yoshiko-shi ra kōen", August 8, 2015

⁴⁷⁴ Groups like Zaitokukai are often dubbed "Neto-Uyo" ("Internet far-right") by the Japanese media, because their members use the Internet to spread their xenophobic messages across the country. Moreover, most members are unemployed men who struggle to find a place in society, reflecting a social and economic malaise that has been very common in Japan in the past decade. Zaitokukai's full name is Zainichi Tokken wo Yurusanai Shimin no Kai, which literally translates into "People's Association Against Privileges for Korean-born Japanese citizens."

questioned the credibility of the US nuclear umbrella, stating that it was time for the Japanese to provide for their own security. Zaitokukai is supported by a party called Shinpū (Restoration Political Party – New Wind), whose candidate, Nobuyuki Suzuki, explicitly includes the nuclear option in his political agenda, claiming that Japan is surrounded by dangerous countries.⁴⁷⁵

Beside the threat posed by regional proliferation, one of the main arguments of those who advocate the nuclear option is that nuclear weapons are a valid card to play for political and diplomatic leverage. Tadae Takubo, professor of international politics at Kyōrin University and Chairman of Nippon Kaigi, stated that “Japan must start saying right now that it might go nuclear”, arguing that “forsaking nuclear weapons is like taking part in a boxing match and promising not to throw hooks.”⁴⁷⁶ In 2013 Takubo co-authored with



Nobuyuki Suzuki, leader of the Shinpū (Restoration Political Party – New Wind) Party, is the first political candidate to explicitly promote a nuclear-armed Japan. Other goals proposed in this poster are: rejection of immigrants and severing diplomatic ties with the ROK. (2014)

Kimindo Kusaka and Ronald A. Morse a book called “*Tsuyoi Nippon*” *wo torimodosu tame*

⁴⁷⁵ Suzuki, who is supported by other political figures like Tamogami, also claims that Japan should cut off its diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea.

⁴⁷⁶ Tadae Takubo, quoted by Yuri Kageyama, “North Korea threat makes Japanese think the unthinkable: Going Nuclear”, *Associated Press*, August 11, 2003



The cover of the brochure promoted by Ishin Seitō – Shinpū (Restoration Political Party – New Wind): the large title reads: “Quick! Let’s get nuclear weapons;” the young man in the middle says “let’s think about it,” the taller one holding a book comments “I’m not really interested;” the old man on the right says “I feel safe because America will be there for me” and the young woman shouts “Wow, we really are surrounded by nuclear-armed states!” (2012) (source: Ishin Seitō – Shinpū official website: <http://shimpu.jpn.org/>)

ni ima hitsuyō na koto [What we need to bring back a “strong Japan”], where he explains why it is crucial for Japan to part ways with a United States who thinks of Japan as a “weak” country, and this transformation into a “strong Japan” will need the acquisition of a domestic nuclear weapons program.

Shintarō Ishihara, successful novelist, Tokyo Governor from 1999 to 2012 and still a very influential figure in Japanese politics, has always been one of the staunchest and most consistent supporters of the Japanese nuclear option, as shown earlier in the chapter. In an interview with *The Independent* in March 2011 when still in office, Ishihara observed, “(...) diplomatic bargaining power means nuclear weapons. All the [permanent] members of the [United Nations]

Security Council have them.”⁴⁷⁷ He reiterated those arguments in July 2011 and in November 2012, when he noted, “States that do not possess nuclear weapons do not have any diplomatic power.”⁴⁷⁸ Around the same time, LDP Diet member and former Minister of Defense Tomomi Inada also spoke in favor of a nuclear option for Japan, stating in her

⁴⁷⁷ *The Independent*, “Japan must develop nuclear weapons, warns Tokyo governor”, March 8, 2011

⁴⁷⁸ *News24 Japan*, “Nihon wa Kakuheiki shimyureishon wo – Ishihara Daihyō”, November 20, 2012

interview with the magazine *Seiron*, that “Japan should explore possessing nuclear weapons not only as part of a merely theoretical discussion, but rather adopting it as national strategy.”⁴⁷⁹

Another prominent figure of Japanese politics has recently caused an uproar in Japan for advocating an indigenous nuclear arsenal for Japan: Toshio Tamogami. Former Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) Chief of Staff Tamogami was forced into retirement in 2008 for denying Japan’s militarist past in an essay.⁴⁸⁰ However, instead of retracting any of his claims, he remarked that his opinions are in fact widely shared by many lawmakers and Self-Defense Forces personnel, then calling for Japan to possess nuclear weapons in order to increase its international standing and become a major power.⁴⁸¹ Tamogami lost the race for Tokyo governorship in February 2014, finishing fourth out of sixteen candidates, but the nationalist group Ganbare Nippon he chaired up until March 2015 is still raising tides of revisionist nationalism across Japan. Tamogami is also backed up by Prime Minister Shinzō Abe; the former ASDF Chief of Staff has indeed declared at a press conference: “Probably, my policies (...) have the highest affinity to the Abe administration’s. In regard to how we view history, how we view the nation, I believe that fundamentally we share the same idea.”⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁹ *Seiron*, March 2011 issue, interview with Inada Tomomi and Satō Mamoru

⁴⁸⁰ Tamogami’s essay is available at:

http://www.apa.co.jp/book_report/images/2008jyusyou_saiyuusyu_english.pdf Journalist Sōichirō Tahara describes Tamogami’s revisionist essay a “verbal coup d’état [that] could turn into the real thing in the not too distant future” (Sōichirō Tahara, “The Tamogami Debacle: Dismissal of a Japanese General and the Danger of Indignation”, *Japan Focus*, November 14, 2008).

⁴⁸¹ “I think there should be debate about this, because nuclear deterrence would be enhanced as a result,” Toshio Tamogami told reporters at the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Japan, December 1, 2008, “Ousted Japan Air Force chief Calls for Nuclear Weapons Debate”, Bloomberg.com, December 1, 2008; *The Japan Times*, “Essay judges defend Tamogami”, December 9, 2008; *The Telegraph*, “Japan should develop nuclear weapons”, December 1, 2008

⁴⁸² *International Business Times*, “Japan’s Far-Right: Nostalgia for Imperial Past, Or Dire Threat To

The emergence of this aspect in nuclear statements indicates that the nuclear debate is increasingly blended in with the nationalist rhetoric to the growing Japanese nationalism and populism that goes hand in hand with the shift to the right in December 2012. An interesting peculiarity of the LDP that ruled Japanese politics during the Cold War, and for most of the post-Cold War era, lies precisely in their original ambivalence: their strong support and loyalty to the U.S.-Japan alliance as well as their deep feelings of humiliation and resentment about the postwar system imposed by the U.S. Those conflicting feelings, also reflected in the split between the pragmatists and the revisionists in the 1990s, have always clashed together. The nuance in the government's nuclear stance added in the late 1990s has therefore an additional populist dimension that speaks to the heart of die-hard conservatives. The perceived weakness of Japan's postwar security identity is also lamented by Shintarō Ishihara who argues that Japan suffers from a "passivity complex" due to the lack of a national consciousness.⁴⁸³ Political scientist Shin'ichi Kitaoka had indeed already argued in 2001 that the "recent mounting evidence of nationalism in Japan is merely a backlash against the excessive oppression of these feelings since the country's defeat in World War II,"⁴⁸⁴ echoing his colleague Tatsumi Okabe's view that Japan has suffered from a weak sense of collectivity and an absence of healthy nationalism in the postwar era.⁴⁸⁵

Future?", March 19, 2014

⁴⁸³ Shintarō Ishihara, "Pekin gorin wo danko boikotto seyo, Senkaku ni jieitai wo jōchū saseyo, Chūgoku bunretsu wo nerae" [Let's firmly boycott the Beijing Olympics, keep our Self-Defense Forces on the Senkaku Islands permanently, and break up China], 2005, Bungei Shunju, pp. 94-103

⁴⁸⁴ Shin'ichi Kitaoka, "Is Nationalism Intensifying in Japan?" *Journal of Japanese Trade and Industry* 20/1 (January 1, 2001)

⁴⁸⁵ Tatsumi Okabe, *Chūgoku no taigai senryaku* [China's external strategy], Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 2002

Prime Minister Abe's nationalistic administration, indeed, has revived those feelings that have long been considered politically-incorrect in postwar Japan. Tamogami's comment that outside of Japan, "people are taught how great and wonderful their country is" whereas in postwar Japan "speech that was anti-Japan (...) was free"⁴⁸⁶ perfectly illustrates the frustration of some politicians and experts who see the pacifist identity as a hindrance in normalizing the country. Tamogami is a very prolific writer and has published at least a book a year since his 2008 forced retirement – all dealing with Japan's unfair suppression of its legitimate patriotic feelings and the country's natural choice of the nuclear option.

The tensions between Abe's government and pacifist and anti-nuclear activists have been increasing since 2012. In August 2015, Shinzō Abe's decision to omit the Three Non-Nuclear Principles in his Hiroshima speech on August 6th caused anxiety among many citizens, prompting some angered responses from the *hibakusha* community. Activist Toshiyuki Mimaki's comment is particularly striking as he stated that while listening to the speech, he was not aware that the Prime Minister had left out the principles, noting: "It is truly sad that it seems like the government is not taking seriously the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. (...) It is frightful that the words went missing from the prime minister's public speech while we were not paying close attention. The principles may be emasculated in the eras of my children or grandchildren while they are not aware."⁴⁸⁷ Prime Minister Abe's

⁴⁸⁶ Bloomberg.com, "Ousted Japan Air Force chief Calls for Nuclear Weapons Debate", December 1, 2008; *J-Cast News*, "Tamogami 'shinryaku hitei' ronbun no haikai – Jieitai to APA group no missetsu na kankei" (Behind Tamogami's essay denying aggressive past – the very close relationship between the Self-Defense Forces and the APA Group), November 4, 2008

⁴⁸⁷ *Asahi Shimbun*, "Anxiety rises over Abe omitting non-nuclear principles from Hiroshima speech", August 7, 2015

deliberate choice to omit the non-nuclear principles in his Hiroshima speech, while keeping them in his Nagasaki speech three days later, seems to support the idea that there is indeed an attempt to test the waters of the public perception vis-à-vis nuclear weapons, which echoes the pattern of the three Rs: Reach, Reconcile, Reassure.

Conclusion:

LDP member and former Executive Director of the International Energy Agency Nobuo Tanaka writes in 2018: “nuclear power has national security implications. (...) [G]iven recent geopolitical developments in Northeast Asia, eliminating Japan’s nuclear capability could be very unwise. If so, whether and how we should maintain Japan’s nuclear capability needs to include the national security perspective as part of a serious public discussion. Japan will never ever build nuclear weapons, and yet being suspected of doing so by some of its neighbors, is probably the strongest national security reason for Japan to continue to use nuclear power.”⁴⁸⁸

Tanaka’s statement, combined with his other provocative comment (p. 100) again captures the meaning of Japan’s nuclear policy. The very tension between the postwar pacifist identity and the complaints of the neo-nationalists, with the continuous pursuit of nuclear energy compose the country’s nuclear hedging posture.

Most scholars have predicted that it is unlikely that Japan will go nuclear in the near future mainly because of the major financial, political, and diplomatic costs that such a decision would entail, as well as the domestic obstacles that the government would face. It is indeed unlikely that Japan will acquire nuclear weapons, precisely because keeping up the suspicion that it might do so makes Japan a more powerful player in the region, and also within the U.S.-Japan alliance.⁴⁸⁹ This final chapter therefore has laid out the elements that compose the mist of doubts around Japan’s nuclear intentions, adding the last piece of

⁴⁸⁸ Nobuo Tanaka, “Nuclear Energy – Light Water Reactors at a Crossroad,” in *Japan’s Energy Conundrum: A Discussion of Japan’s Energy Circumstances and U.S.-Japan Energy Relations*, edited by Phyllis Genther Yoshida, Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, June 2018

⁴⁸⁹ Author’s interview with Narushige Michishita: “those nuclear statements by Japanese politicians are all directed to the U.S., so that the U.S. does not deprioritize Japan,” February 20, 2018

the nuclear hedging stance:

- the historical continuity of nuclear statements since the 1950s,
- the discrepancy between the government's and the public's perceptions of security,
- the shift in the government's rhetoric in explaining nuclear latency as a strength in nonproliferation and disarmament policy;
- intermittent mistrust towards the United States and a fear of abandonment;
- frustrations of conservative leaders over antimilitarist obstacles in walking towards a normal Japan;
- recent waves of nationalism and proponents of the nuclear option among the public (who have become more vocal through the internet and social media in particular)

Analyzing the political behavior that accompanies the preservation of nuclear latency has also shown that government officials have started to reconcile the two poles of the national nuclear policy – in other words, they are moving towards a narrative that links all the different components of the original Nuclear Bargain analyzed in this work: the pacifist identity, the anti-nuclear sentiment, the *hibakusha* status, the pursuit of nuclear energy, disarmament ideals, and security concerns.

CONCLUSION

Japan's Nuclear Conundrum: Coming Full Circle

In a July 2013 interview, Ichirō Ozawa observed that the rising revisionist nationalism is an unsurprising reaction to the “faithful dog Hachikō status” that Japan has endured since the end of World War II.⁴⁹⁰ The politician then explicitly stated that the LDP’s ultimate plan behind its insistence on restarting the nuclear power plants even after the Fukushima disaster is Japan’s eventual acquisition of nuclear weapons,⁴⁹¹ which echoes Shigeru Ishiba’s July 2012 statement quoted earlier in this work.

Whether true or not, it is certain that the end of World War II brought about the emergence and consolidation of elements that, combined, compose a nuclear hedging strategy. The combination of the four elements studied in this work, suggest indeed that Japan’s nuclear policy takes the shape of an effective nuclear hedging strategy. These elements are:

1. The anti-nuclear weapons identity;
2. The way and timing nuclear energy was introduced in postwar Japan;
3. The building and perpetuating of a strong nuclear energy culture and structure;
4. Maintaining a political rhetoric on national nuclear capabilities.

⁴⁹⁰ Ichirō Ozawa, *Independent Web Journal*, July 12, 2013; the video version of the interview is available on the *Independent Web Journal*’s YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9-bfY38Ek>

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.; Expressing his views on the matter, Ozawa ruled out a nuclear option for Japan, describing it as “completely unrealistic” because of the uselessness of such weapons.

The first element, which constitutes the first part of the “Nuclear Bargain” made by Japan in the aftermath of the war, is embedded in Japan’s postwar pacifist and antimilitarist identity. As Chapter I showed, the anti-nuclear weapons sentiment of the public subtly started after the atrocious human experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but was mainly consolidated with the Lucky Dragon incident in 1954 through a consumerist and maternalist mass protest. This grassroots nuclear allergy merged with the vehement anti-war sentiment that broke out among the public after the defeat in 1945, and reached up to the policy level, culminating in 1967 with the announcement of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

The *hibakukoku* status of Japan is also part of this identity. The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which in Japanese are written in katakana as opposed to the kanji that simply indicate the cities, have been used by politicians as a symbol of Japanese uniqueness over the decades. “The only country that has been subjected to atomic bombing” (“唯一の被爆国,” – *yuiitsu no hibakukoku*) is indeed a very common phrase that many politicians have used in public statements.⁴⁹² The phrase started being commonly used in the 1970s, after Prime Ministers began attending the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony. The first Prime Minister to attend the ceremony on August 6, 1971 was Eisaku Satō, who had declared the Three Non-Nuclear Principles four years prior. Since that year, in fact, the phrase has become very popular in most Peace Memorial Speeches every year in August, and every

⁴⁹² A search in the online archives of the MOFA shows how the expression figures in over 1320 documents and speeches by Japanese politicians and policymakers since 1971. A search in the Diet debates also shows that the phrase has been used numerous times by Dietsmen from every party. In 2010, the phrase was nuanced to “*yuiitsu no sensō hibakukoku*” (“the only country that has been subjected to *wartime* atomic bombing” - emphasis mine-) to distinguish the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from the ones of nuclear testing around the world.

Prime Minister since 1998 at least has included the phrase in his Hiroshima-Nagasaki Peace Memorial Speech.⁴⁹³ Moreover, the postwar Constitution, dubbed the “pacifist constitution,” has been a linchpin of Japan’s antimilitarist identity, and has worked as a constraint for the country’s defense and security policy. The national non-nuclear weapons policy has thus created a divide inside the nuclear policy, that sees disarmament ideals and security concerns as two separate items. There have been some recent attempts to adjust this divide and introduce a more realistic view of Japan’s role regarding the two aspects – for instance, Japan’s official policy has shifted in 2016 from being a “leader” to “mediator” in disarmament and nonproliferation.⁴⁹⁴

The second element, studied in Chapter II, is the way and timing nuclear energy was introduced to Japan. This constitutes the other part of the Nuclear Bargain. Yasuhiro Nakasone’s flair and foresight for a new postwar opportunity for Japan translated into the rapid establishment of a governmental structure for the promotion of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. By linking the idea of peace and prosperity with nuclear energy, the government, with the help of the United States’ USIS, successfully developed the technology and facilities to produce nuclear energy. The rhetoric that was enforced in this top-to-bottom mechanism is that Japan’s atomic survivor status makes it the perfect messenger for turning nuclear energy into something that would serve peace. In the meantime, Japan rose to the status of nuclear latent country, and added more sophisticated features (fast breed reactors, reprocessing system) to its nuclear program, while grappling

⁴⁹³ The transcripts of all the Hiroshima Peace Memorial speeches by Prime Ministers are available on: <http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/>

⁴⁹⁴ Author’s research on disarmament and nonproliferation in the debate records at the House of Representatives, Diet of Japan: http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_kaigiroku.nsf/html/kaigiroku/0005_1.htm

with technical problems that are still a serious issue today.

The message of nuclear energy for peace was reinforced by the third element: consolidating a nuclear energy culture (*genpatsu bunka*) throughout the Cold War and up until the shock of the Fukushima nuclear accident of March 11, 2011, analyzed in Chapter III. By making efforts to perpetuate the Nuclear Bargain through the construction of symbols, myths, and a compact bureaucratic structure, Japan's nuclear policy has succeeded in developing an advanced civil nuclear program with a controversial reprocessing program, and separating nuclear energy further away from its security implications. The use of friendly mascots and promotional videos have had a great impact on the public's positive perceptions of nuclear energy, creating the narrative that made nuclear energy and the reprocessing program vital to Japan's basic interests. The division that this significant nuclear charm offensive created between the civil and military sides of nuclear energy is crucial in understanding the development of Japan as a nuclear threshold state with the general public's support. Gavan McCormack even points out that "[p]rotected and privileged within the American embrace, [Japan] has evolved into a nuclear-cycle country and plutonium super-power."⁴⁹⁵ This is where the fourth element comes into play: because of the existence of national nuclear latent capabilities, Japan's nuclear political statements have always caused a sense of uncertainty and unease with regards to Japan's nuclear intentions. Chapter IV showed that there has always been a historical continuity in the nuclear option debate, but also in more general nuclear statements. Calls to start a more open nuclear debate certainly amplified and acquired an increasingly public dimension around the turn of the 21st century. However, the political

⁴⁹⁵ Gavan McCormack, "Japan as a Plutonium Superpower," *Japan Focus*, December 2007

statements over the nuclear option have always been present in the postwar political debate. The most noteworthy turning point is perhaps in the late 1990s, when the government's stance linked the *hibakukoku* status of Japan with its nuclear latency and its decision not to go nuclear. This view finds its rhetorical logical in the fact that the *hibakukoku* status not only makes Japan the perfect advocate for disarmament, but also legitimizes its status as virtual nuclear country, because it chooses *not* to go nuclear despite the existing capabilities. The original postwar Nuclear Bargain is the moment where these elements shaped Japan's nuclear policy twist, creating the starting point of the country's nuclear hedging posture. The apparent contradictions in Japan's nuclear policy described in the introduction of this work thus find a coherency when analyzed in combination.

In light of the details studied within each of the four elements, Japan's nuclear hedging posture has a twofold purpose. The most obvious one is deterring Japan's regional rivals, i.e. China and North Korea, and sending them the message that should a crisis occur, Japan's nuclear latency can be turned into nuclear weapons very quickly. The second purpose of this stance is to constantly gauge the level of security commitment from the United States. The final chapter showed that mistrust towards the U.S. commitment was always one of the factors in Japanese nuclear statements. After President Obama's historical visit to Hiroshima on May 27, 2016, his administration attempted to include the no first use policy into the U.S. nuclear declaratory policy. However, the main reason why the adoption of such policy became difficult to implement was Japan's concern. The Japanese government's belief was indeed that adopting a no first use policy would weaken

the perception of American commitment to Japan's defense.⁴⁹⁶ Japan's historical fear of abandonment is now complemented by a fear of a new "Japan passing" moment with the Trump Administration. The idea that the United States will downgrade the security alliance with Japan in favor of other priorities is currently very alive. Journalist Takao Toshikawa even used the phrase "Japan dissing" to describe this rough patch with the United States.⁴⁹⁷ The most recent (June 2018) survey by the Pew Research Center shows that when asked "if your country and China got into a serious military conflict, do you think the U.S. would defend your country militarily?" 60 percent of the Japanese respondents answered "yes." While it might seem like a significant number, the participants from South Korea and the Philippines responded, respectively, 73 percent and 66 percent.⁴⁹⁸

The nuclear policy resulting from the combination of the four elements analyzed in this dissertation, therefore, goes beyond ambivalence. By encompassing all the elements and their different components, Japan's nuclear policy allows to address each interest at stake while still going through the normalization process.

The 3.11 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident has started to chip away at the third element of the hedging posture with the public losing faith in Japanese nuclear power, and gradually questioning the nuclear culture. In a 2015 poll by the pro-nuclear Japan Atomic Energy Relations Organization, 47.9 percent of respondents said that nuclear energy should be abolished gradually and 14.8 percent said that it should be abolished immediately. Only 10.1 percent said that the use of nuclear energy should be maintained, and a mere 1.7

⁴⁹⁶ *The Washington Post*, "Obama Plans Major Nuclear Policy Changes in His Final Months," July 10, 2016; Steve Fetter and John Wolfstahl, "No First Use and Credible Deterrence," *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, April 2018; author's interview with Elaine Bunn, May 2, 2018

⁴⁹⁷ *The Washington Post*, "Trump, Abe to meet as U.S.-Japan relationship shows strains over North Korea, trade," April 14, 2018

⁴⁹⁸ Pew Research Center, "Do U.S. Allies in Asia Still Trust the Nuclear Umbrella?," June 18, 2018

percent said that it should be increased.⁴⁹⁹ Another survey by the *Asahi Shimbun* in 2016 was even more negative: 57 percent of the public opposed restarting existing nuclear power plants even if they satisfied new regulatory standards, and 73 percent supported a phaseout of nuclear power, with 14 percent advocating an immediate shutdown of all nuclear plants.⁵⁰⁰ With the Abe administration sending the message that nuclear power is still indispensable for Japan,⁵⁰¹ the gap between the public and the government is therefore now increasing even with regards to nuclear energy. Will the Japanese government eventually take into account the public's growing anti-nuclear energy sentiment as it tried to appease the anti-nuclear weapons one? Although Fukushima has introduced some doubts in the legitimacy of the postwar nuclear energy culture, it is hard to imagine that the original Nuclear Bargain can be reversed into erasing decades of construction of a nuclear hedging stance, especially now that Japan is going through a slow but steady security renaissance.

⁴⁹⁹ The survey is available here: <http://www.jaero.or.jp/data/01jigyoku/pdf/tyousakenkyu27/r2015.pdf>

⁵⁰⁰ Tatsujirō Suzuki, "Six Years After Fukushima, Much of Japan has lost Faith in Nuclear Power," March 9, 2017

⁵⁰¹ *South China Morning Post*, "Shinzo Abe says Japan 'cannot do without' nuclear power, on eve of Fukushima disaster," March 10, 2016

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Takashi Hiraoka, former Mayor of Hiroshima

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Research in Japan – February 2018:

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Research in the United States – December 2017-June 2018:

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