



## JAPAN'S REMILITARIZATION?

By the beginning of April, Japanese Ministry of Defence has begun preparing a new Midterm Defense Plan for fiscal years 2019-2023. Although the plan has not been officially published yet, it is highly possible that as the previous Midterm Defense Plan for 2014-2018, it will be based on the recommendations prepared by the Research Committee on Security within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

Among the recommendations prepared by the Committee in June last year, special attention should be given to the idea of acquiring "enemy counter-attack capability". The following report also called for the development of indigenously-developed military surveillance satellites and offensive cyber capabilities. Furthermore, the Committee identified increasing the number of amphibious vehicles and cruise missiles capable of striking ground targets as well as the modernisation of integrated missile defence system as new priorities. What seems to be new is the fact that the Committee called for the development of offensive weapons, which indirectly contradicts the Japanese Constitution.

The report also suggests that Japan should use NATO countries' benchmark for defence expenditures as a new reference point. This fact would mark a departure from the unwritten principle established by the prime minister Takeo Miki (1974-1976) – limit of defence spending should not exceed 1% of GDP - and constitute a far reaching precedent in Japan's defence policy. Frankly speaking, defence budget exceeding 2% of Japan's GDP seems unrealistic. However, military budget at the level of more than 1% of GDP is a possible scenario. Since 2013, Abe's administration systematically increases military expenditures. Japan's defence budget in fiscal year 2018 hit record 46 billion USD. Furthermore, planned purchases of F-35A fighters, Global Hawk surveillance aircrafts, Osprey aircrafts and AAVs will require additional expenses.

Policy of Abe's government can be analysed in two ways. Taking into account the Rational Actor Model used in the field of FPA (Foreign Policy Analysis), growth of Japan's military expenditures seems to be a logic response to the policy conducted by Beijing and Pyongyang in the region. Chinese expansionist maritime policy was criticized on many occasions by the Japanese officials. Tokyo perceives China's aspirations to gain control over the South China Sea (taking into account the defencelessness of the ASEAN states) and East China Sea (mainly through the establishment of Air Defense Identification Zone by China) not only in terms of gaining strategic advantage in the region, yet also as a dangerous, prospective case in the ongoing Sino-Japanese dispute over the Senkaku Islands.

In the case of North Korea, operational status of the *No-Dong* Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (1200-1500 km range) and the development of *KN-11* and *KN-15* missiles are the main concern for Tokyo's security. Moreover, instability in the region caused North Korean nuclear tests as well as harsh statements made by the U.S. administration concerning possible military intervention, exacerbates insecurity and unpredictability in the region. It also seems that the recent warming of relations between North and South Korea is not being treated by the Japanese administration as a solid step towards denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. It also shows how the Japanese perception on issues related to security had changed in recent years. One of the examples is the ongoing debate concerning plans to alter the pacifist Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution.

On the other hand, the ongoing militarization can be analysed as a strictly political move of Abe's administration. By putting security issues on the main agenda, Japanese government redirects public's attention from social and economic issues. So far, the following tactic seems to be effective, as the results of 2017 Japanese general elections have shown.

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## POLISH POINT OF VIEW:

In his parliamentary speech concerning the main directions of Polish Foreign Policy, Minister Jacek Czaputowicz did not give too much of attention (just as his predecessors) to Asia. **The fact that Poland became a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, creates a good opportunity to articulate Warsaw's position in non-European affairs (despite certain limitations), which in longer perspective can be beneficial in terms of trade related and technological cooperation with the biggest economies in Asia.**

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Due to the aggressive cybernetic policy conducted by the Russian Federation and the fact that Poland remains within the geostrategic sphere of Moscow's interests, **Poland should learn from the Japanese experiences in this field (cyber-attacks sponsored by the PRC and DPRK). The development of offensive cyber capabilities, which was listed in the recommendations, shall be analysed.**

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Poland by purchasing Patriot system will gain capabilities to protect its territory as in the case of BMD system which is being developed by Tokyo in cooperation Washington after North Korean tests *Taepodong-1* missiles in 1998. **That is why it seems necessary to analyse how the Japanese government will modernise the system in cooperation with the United States.**

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Based on:

- J. Wright, Japan's 2018 Midterm Defense Plan Stands To Be Consequential, Pacific Forum;
- Y. Tatsumi, All About the Yen: Japan Begins Mid-Term Defense Planning, The Diplomat;
- <https://missilethreat.csis.org/>, Missiles of North Korea, CSIS Missile Defence Project.