



Goraiko: Japan's National Security in an Era of Asymmetric Threats

W. Lee Radcliffe

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Missile threats. Terrorist attacks using biological and chemical weapons. Mass hostage-takings. Foreign special operations infiltrations into territorial waters. State-sponsored kidnappings of Japanese citizens. And multiple neighboring autocratic regimes developing nuclear weapons. These are some of the many national security challenges Japan has faced in the two decades after the end of the Cold War. Japan's basic defense strategy through the 1980s, called *hoppo jushi* or "emphasis on the northern region," aimed to develop a basic military capability to defend the archipelago from a possible Soviet conventional invasion from the north. After the demise of the Soviet Union and the ensuing instability in Asia from the early 1990s, however, a myriad of national security events impacted Japan and its interests in the region that were non-conventional and asymmetric in nature. Focused almost entirely on economic development since the end of World War II, Japanese policymakers and military leaders were initially unprepared to deal with each successive crisis. Through gradual yet ultimately dramatic reforms of its national security structure and intelligence capabilities following each crisis, together with a refocused defense strategy called *rito boei* or "remote island defense" beginning in the early 2000s, Japan has modernized its national defense capabilities to meet the asymmetric challenges of the 21st century. The "Land of the Rising Sun" is rising again as a democratic power in Asia, yet, another major challenge looms in the future even as asymmetric challenges continue to intensify. Find out more in "Goraiko: Japan's National Security in an Era of Asymmetric Threats."



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