

Pacifism Redefined?

Japan's Security Policy in the Era of Strategic Competition



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Abstract

Japan's new security documents announced in 2022, including the National Security Strategy and its first National Defense Strategy, marked the transformation of Tokyo's security practice. It is now moving toward the possession of counterstrike capabilities and doubling the defense spending—clear departure from the post-war trajectory of self-restraint. But why did these changes occur, and what happened to security policy norms in Japan? To address these questions, this lecture highlights how domestic norms, the external environment, and the government's policy interacted each other. The analysis suggests that domestic norms, which are often mentioned as a constraint of security policy, are not monolithic: while the shift in the balance of power and external shocks accelerated erosion of antimilitarism, Tokyo has positioned itself as a power maintaining the status quo of the international order amid the U.S.-China competition as well as Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. The recent policy shift was pushed by emerging norms that champion Japan's responsibility for peace and stability, and this implies that the nature of domestic norms in security affairs is gradually changing from prohibition to a driving force.

*This lecture will be held as part of IRL103 "Japan's International Relations."

Date: Thursday, January 11, 2024

Time: 10:10-11:20 (JST)

Venue: H-262

Registration: Please use the QR code or [Link](#)
(except for the IRL103 students).



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