JAPAN'S DILEMMA: CHOOSING BETWEEN ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND MILITARY REARMAMENT

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ABSTRACT

There have been great and massive debates inside as well as outside Japan on the possibility of its rearmament. This paper intends to analyze Japan's policy decision on whether it should continue with its present economic diplomacy or to embark on military rearmament. It is interesting to acknowledge that Japan's situation can only be explained by using three contending theories of neo-realism, liberalism and constructivism. These three theories complement each other and indeed, play an important role in determining Japan's possible course of action. This paper will also suggest that Japan will adopt military rearmament as its long-term goal by taking into account of the regional security problems, the economic setbacks and the feasibility of maintaining the US armed forces and US-Japan security alliance. Japan has proven that it can handle the international role like other countries by sending its SDF personnel to participate in the minesweeping job in Gulf, peacekeeping activities as well as dealing with the refugees in a war torn countries. Japan's deteriorating economic has suggested that its economic diplomacy will not last long and therefore, will not be as effective as during its booming years. Japan also suffers setback in its security alliance with the US especially with regards to the military spending and sustainability of US armed forces and bases in Japan. These problems as well as the changing perceptions of the Japanese leaders and its society also affected the choices and decisions taken by Japan with respects to the dilemma of economic diplomacy and military rearmament. Concisely, Japan's possible choice between the two cannot be positively determined but yet, with the statistics and the facts highlighted above, Japan might move a step forward in pursuing military rearmament as its possible course of action in the future.
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