

Japan's Threat Perception During the Cold War

A Psychological Account

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4 Explaining Japan's threat perception

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4 Explaining Japan's threat perception

Having refuted the Low Perceived Threat (LPT) proposition in the previous chapter, this chapter outlines an alternative explanation for why Japanese threat perceptions as conduct, speech, and thought evolved the way they did during the early Cold War, highlighting the role of five psychological factors including the need of state leaders to balance between varied security threats and vulnerabilities, strategic preferences/motivated biases, personal experience with the threat, estimated exposure to future threats, an acute sense of organizational vulnerability, the spatial distribution of danger, and the element of novelty. In line with the book's methodological stance of critical philosophical realism (see Chapter 2), I use abductive inference to generate plausible explanations from available data.¹

In putting forward this psychological explanation for Japanese threat perception I also address questions raised in the previous chapter. To recall, the summary of key findings above raises three sets of follow-up questions. First, in relation to threat perception-as-conduct, why was it that in the early and late 1950s both the threats of Soviet invasion and communist subversion were countered as existential and why was the threat of nuclear war countered as existential in the late 1960s? Second, in relation to threat perception-as-speech, why did Japan's national conversation about security threats eschew references to state-based threats, and when, why, and how did certain actors break the taboo on several occasions during this period? Third, in relation to threat perception as thought, why did SDF personnel judge the Soviet threat to be more serious than their civilian counterparts at the JDA did? Why did several of Japan's elected leaders view Communism as an existential political threat while perceiving only a low military threat from the Soviet Union, and relatedly, why did PM Satō come to perceive a high intensity of Soviet military danger in the early 1970s? And finally, why did defense officials and elected leaders perceive China as an existential military threat in the second half of the 1960s?

Balancing a wide range of security threats and vulnerabilities

To explain why the threats of Soviet invasion, communist subversion, and nuclear war were countered as existential in the early and late 1950s, and late 1960s, it is

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important to delve into the mindset of elected leaders and to trace how external and internal developments amplified their pre-existing sense of vulnerability (i.e., perceived internal weakness) to a wide range of interrelated security threats – wider than those discussed so far. It is only when we consider these developments through psychological lens that Japan's measures to counter security threats can be grasped in their proper context.

It is worth addressing an objection to this claim before proceeding. Some might object to my interpretation of the Japanese state countering direct aggression and indirect aggression as existential threats in the early 1950s due to intense threat perception held by *Japanese* decision-makers. Critics might point out, first, to the vital role the United States played in pressuring Japan into adopting these extraordinary measures since the former reversed its policy toward Japan in 1947 and, relatedly, to the centrist leadership's resistance to large-scale rearmament.² Thus, critics might speculate, had the United States not insisted that the SDF be a substantial military force, the SDF would have been reduced in both size and weaponry. Likewise, critics might add, if the security threats Japanese leaders sought to counter were “truly” existential, then why didn't Japanese leaders choose to fully rearm, in a manner and scale like their West German counterparts? Indeed, prominent centrist figures like Yoshida and Ikeda went to great lengths to resist American (and right-wing) pressure to fully rearm. Following this logic, to what extent were Japan's extraordinary measures in the early 1950s a result of intense threat perceptions as held in Tokyo rather than in Washington?

To rebut these objections, I suggest we acknowledge that Japan's centrist leaders had a wider range of interrelated security threats and vulnerabilities in mind than those discussed so far. As we have seen, two primary threats occupied the agenda of political and defense elites in Tokyo (as well as the political discourse): direct and indirect aggression. But crucially, three *additional* threats weighed heavily on political elites at various points during this period: the threat of *militarism*, the threat of *war*, and the threat of *abandonment* by the United States. Often, leaders' preferred measures to secure Japan were a result of the need to balance between these varied threats.³

Let me begin with the first two threats of direct and indirect aggression. As Chapter 3 detailed, in the early 1950s, these two primary threats occupied the agenda of political and defense elites in Tokyo (as well as the political discourse). While these threats gained wide attention *after* the outbreak of the Korean War, which “completely transformed the scene in the Far East,”⁴ and which saw a series of violent incidents taken by the Japanese Communist Party (JCP), the strong impact these developments had on Japanese leaders was because of their *pre-existing* perceptions of diverse security threats and vulnerabilities.

Recall, for example, that the National Police Reserve (NPR) was conceived two weeks after North Korean forces invaded the South in June 1950 but that the Yoshida-led cabinet was *already* concerned about the lack of an adequate, centralized policy force, which the “Supreme Command for the Allied Powers” (SCAP) had formed in the early phase of the occupation period.⁵ This sense of vulnerability about threats to domestic security led to the urgent approval and enforcement

of the NPR law by the Cabinet. Similarly, consider how, *already* displeased with SCAP's policies of legalizing the Japanese Communist Party and of enacting laws that encouraged labor organization and protected the right to strike, the Japanese government and business elites acted to dismiss more than 20,000 communists and communist sympathizers from public and private sector jobs after the Korean War broke out, as part of the "Red Purge."⁶ Developments in the "real-world," then, were filtered through pre-existing perceptions and vulnerabilities to inform measures designed to secure Japan from varied threats.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the threat of indirect aggression was given the highest priority among Japanese political elites because of the perception that the Japanese democracy was fragile and that fanatic elements could undermine it. It is in this context that the relative success of the JCP in the 1949 elections (won about 10 percent of the popular vote) and the violence instigated by communists in Japan during the Korean War became a cause for concern. Both PM Yoshida and PM Hatoyama, for example, showed a tendency to over-emphasize the threat of indirect aggression and de-emphasize the threat of external invasion.⁷ Crucially, however, Yoshida and Hatoyama saw the activities of domestic *and* foreign communist elements as closely interlinked. As Yoshida attests in his memoirs, the violent escalation in the JCP's activities seemed to have been dictated from the outside, that is, from Moscow.⁸ And as Hatoyama asserted in Diet, "indirect aggression" meant "all aspects of communism," including activities of communist countries *and* activities of domestic agents like the JCP.⁹ Underlying this heightened sense of danger posed by communist agents at home and abroad was the perceived vulnerability of the Japanese democracy: immature, unstable, and incapable of protecting itself due to "enfeebled police force." It was this vulnerability that also amplified Prime Minister Yoshida's sense of the communist threat as he formed his first cabinet.¹⁰

Let me now incorporate the third and fourth threats (fanatic militarism and war) and demonstrate how these four threats were present in the mindset of centrist leaders – whether consciously or not – and how they informed the choice of extraordinary measures to secure the country. To address the objections outlined earlier, I explore the case of Yoshida Shigeru as he was the most influential figure in the centrist camp, with many of his "followers" or "disciples" leading the country in the 1960s and 1970s.

Yoshida's perception of the dual threats of fanaticism and entrapment in war during the 1950s and early 1960s, while also being attentive to the communist external and domestic threats, can be gleaned from his memoirs. Underlying Yoshida's perception of diverse threats was his interpretation of Japan's recent experience with war, its causes as well as devastation. In the very first chapter of his memoirs, titled "The Unfolding Tragedy," Yoshida recounts Japan's road to war.¹¹ At the heart of this personal account is a "fateful warning" Yoshida had received sometime in 1932–1933 from an American diplomat named Edward Mandell House. House, who served as President Woodrow Wilson's adviser on international affairs during the First World War, had tried to convince Kaiser Wilhelm prior to the war "of the dangers inherent in the belligerent policy" that

Germany was pursuing at the time. The warning was not heeded, and as House had anticipated, a large-scale war stripped Germany of its achievements. In their meeting in the early 1930s, House extended the same advice to Yoshida with respect to Japan, cautioning him to pursue peaceful policies and not war. On his return home, Yoshida conveyed the warning to “as many people as possible,” to no avail. Japan, “for no adequate reason,” launched a major war and brought about the complete destruction of its previous achievements.¹²

Understanding the way influential figures like Yoshida interpreted Japan's recent war and with whom they attributed blame for its disastrous results is crucial to understanding the threat of fanaticism. The blame, centrist figures asserted, lay squarely with extremist military personnel. Thus, it was the “militarists” – uniformed politicians in the Japanese Army – that must be held responsible for the defeat.¹³ Due to this interpretation of Japan's recent history, centrist leaders saw the need to curb the influence of former military personnel and to ensure civilian control of the newly established SDF so that never again would fanatic militarists control Japan. The future of democracy was at stake.

It is important to note that for Yoshida and the centrist leaders, the threat of fanaticism was not limited to militant elements of a right-wing orientation but incorporated militarist elements of left-wing inclination. Indeed, Yoshida's post-script of his memoirs ends with a strong call to resist the threat of “fanaticism, both of the Left and Right.”¹⁴ Thus, Yoshida links his interpretation of Japan's previous war, fanaticism, and communism in a chain of *associative* threat perceptions. And there is yet a final link in this chain: the threat of entrapment in future war. Yoshida's desire to mitigate the danger posed by entrapment can be detected, alongside other threats we have surveyed so far, in Yoshida's warm recollections of his meetings with “Herr Adenauer,” as well as with other West German leaders, during his tour abroad in autumn 1954. As Yoshida recalls,

I found myself in complete agreement with West Germany's leaders as to the proper attitude to be adopted towards the Communist bloc. Since the US and the Soviet Union, the two major powers, are in opposition to each other, one supported by a group of free countries, the other by satellite Communist nations, the only logical policy for both West Germany and Japan to adopt in foreign affairs is cooperation with the US as members of the group of free nations.

So far, so good. Yoshida's preferred foreign policy stance, like West Germany's, is to align with the Free World. But here Yoshida points out a major difference between his views and those of his West German counterparts:

There was one point on which I could not see quite eye to eye with them. This was on the issue of rearmament. They expressed interest in Japan's attitude towards this question. I told them that, for the present, rearmament for Japan would have the opposite effect to that desired – that it was obviously necessary and desirable to possess a certain amount of armed strength, but

to go beyond that point, on a scale that warranted the name of rearmament, would place too great a burden upon our people, would provoke national unrest, and only serve to aid Communist propaganda and infiltration.¹⁵

Let me now address the objection raised earlier in this section. Why did Yoshida believe large-scale rearmament for Japan would be counter-productive at the time? Centrist figures did not object to large-scale rearmament during the first half of the 1950s only because of economic reasons.¹⁶ To centrist leaders, of whom Yoshida was the representative figure, the creation of a strong military so soon after the end of the occupation was perceived to be a dangerous move as it might endanger the fledgling Japanese democracy *and* increase the threat of entrapment in war.¹⁷ Thus, for example, Yoshida expressed his desire to avoid Japan's troops becoming American surrogates charged with policing Asia.¹⁸ And so, rather than indicating moderate threat perception among Japan's centrist leaders, the resistance of centrist politicians to large-scale rearmament – and their opting for limited rearmament – should be viewed in the need of centrist figures to balance four threats: direct aggression/Soviet invasion, indirect aggression/communist subversion, the threat of fanatic militarist elements, and the threat of entrapment in a war (whether conventional or nuclear). Part of the rationale behind the limited scope of Japan's rearmament and of Japan's minimal military contribution to the security of the Far East, I argue, comes from the need to balance between these four threats.

Yoshida seemed to have believed that increased armament will increase not only the danger of militarism but also the danger posed by entrapment in war. Evidence in support of Yoshida's awareness of Japan's vulnerable position in the Cold War and this threat is found in his memoirs, where Yoshida points out that:

Both West Germany and Japan stand on the frontiers of the [free world's] group; for these two countries to maintain their freedom requires the defense of the freedom of the whole group, while their proximity to the Communist countries brings them constantly into contact with these Red-dominated countries, with increased opportunity for negotiations of all kinds with them.¹⁹

In other words, Yoshida is aware that both his country and West Germany are vulnerable due to their position at the “frontiers” of the group. While he makes a claim for the indivisibility of the security of the US-led camp, he also suggests that the proximity to the Communist camp provides both Japan and West Germany an opportunity for engagement, rather than confrontation. That is, Yoshida implicitly expresses his desire to steer Japan away from a future war with the communist bloc.

Yoshida had good reasons to want to avoid war. Coupled with the Eisenhower administration's approval of a new basic national security statement (NSC 162/2, or “New Look”) in October 1953 argued for increasing the reliance on nuclear weapons, the USSR's successful hydrogen bomb test in the summer of the

previous year (August 1953) heightened the threat posed by the Soviet Union and the related threat of entrapment among US allies. As a result, voices calling for alleviating US-Soviet tensions around the world were heard with increasing frequency.²⁰ It is in this context that we should understand the Japanese position in the negotiations between Finance Minister Hayato Ikeda and Assistant Secretary of State Walter Robertson in November 1953 as well, where the Japanese party argued that the maximum size of Japan's ground force would be 180,000 troops, citing economic fragility as the rationale. Indeed, as Michael Schaller argued, if military pact with the United States had to be concluded so that Japan could regain its sovereignty, centrist leaders like Yoshida preferred it to be a limited pact, based on the UN charter, with no military presence in Japan but with a US commitment to defend Japan.²¹ Such a preference maximizes defense against all four threats: sovereignty (indirect aggression and fanaticism), a US commitment to defend Japan (direct aggression), a limited pact based on the UN charter but with no military presence (entrapment).

Interestingly, when Yoshida's successor, Hatoyama Ichirō, became the prime minister in December 1954, he criticized Yoshida for what he considered to be an excessive pro-US foreign policy line. Arguing that such a foreign-policy stance increased the threat of entrapment, Hatoyama asserted that Japan should pursue an "independent" (*jishu dokuritu*) foreign policy and better relations with communist countries. Beginning in June 1955, the Hatoyama government launched diplomatic normalization talks with the Soviet Union, where the momentum to improve relations with Japan has been gathering since Stalin's death in 1953.²² My take on Yoshida's views is somewhat different: although he placed Japan firmly within the "free world" camp, supporting limited rearmament to mitigate the dangers posed by direct and indirect aggression, he was also cautious to resist large-scale rearmament, to guard against the threats of fanaticism and entrapment in war.

Moving to the late 1950s, the threats of Soviet invasion and communist subversion were countered as existential, as the extraordinary measure of a revised Japan-US security alliance was considered and adopted by the Kishi government.²³ But here, too, the threat of entrapment in war and the threat of fanaticism, and the need to balance between these, is key to understanding the context in which this measure was considered and how it evolved along with other measures.²⁴

Let me focus on the mindset of Kishi Nobusuke to demonstrate how the threats of direct aggression, indirect aggression, and entrapment in war informed his support for measures to secure Japan.²⁵ A leading member of what Thomas Berger termed "The Right-Idealists" and Richard Samuels called "Revisionists,"²⁶ Prime Minister Kishi had sought to fashion Japan's national security apparatus in a way that combines substantial military buildup and a conventional alliance, in which a *reciprocal* security commitment with the United States was defining characteristic. Other measures in Kishi's ideal world included the revision of Article 9 of the constitution and the removal of the bans on the acquisition of nuclear weapons, on weapons exports, and on participating in collective defense, none of which was adopted at the time for reasons we will tackle later. Importantly, the motivation behind many of these proposed measures including the revision of

the security treaty, as several scholars pointed out, was grounded in Kishi's desire to enhance Japan's autonomy vis-à-vis the United States and form a more equal relationship with it.²⁷

Yet Kishi's quest for autonomy and treaty revision was also informed by the need to balance between direct and indirect aggression and the looming threat of entrapment in war between the two superpowers. In other words, while Kishi despised communism and placed Japan in alignment with the free world, he also believed he needed to chart a more neutral course for Japan between the free world and the communist camps. Kishi was not alone in realizing the need to maintain a measure of neutrality: by 1958, a poll of Diet members found that 68 percent of members, including a majority 52 percent of LDP members, agreed that Japan should follow a neutral course between the United States and the USSR.²⁸ By dropping many of the measures he had entertained in the past, and by asserting in February 1960 that although Japan possessed the right for collective self-defense, Article 9 did not allow the government to exercise it, Kishi sought to distance Japan from the possibility of entrapment in war with communist countries, that is, the Soviet Union and China, while – crucially – still guarding against the possibility of communist aggression.²⁹ To understand this shift in Kishi's security measures, it is important to consider how real-world developments were filtered through perceptions of diverse security threats and vulnerabilities.

The 1950s saw a series of military and near-military clashes in Japan's security neighborhood involving the United States and communist nations, including the Korean War and the Taiwan crises of 1954 and 1958. At the same time, the "Far-East" clause in the new treaty stipulated that the United States could use its military in Japan to operate in the region after "prior consultations" with the Government of Japan, in what could make Japan a target of communist retaliation. Asked to clarify the geographical scope of the Far East in Diet, Japanese officials and Kishi himself contended that the Far East included parts of China, Siberia, as well as the islands of Quemoy and Matsu, where the United States and China had almost clashed twice in the previous decade.³⁰ To make matters worse, in May 1960, the Soviet Union downed a US U-2 aircraft while on a photographic aerial reconnaissance mission above Soviet territory. In the aftermath of the incident, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev warned US allies not to allow U-2 missions from their territories. As members of the opposition pointed out, Japan too was hosting U-2 aircraft in the Atsugi airbase near Tokyo, in what intensified the threat of entrapment among politicians and the public.³¹ Thus, in the late 1950s, US military presence in Japan meant that the threat of entrapment in war with communist countries – especially nuclear war in the Far East – seemed increasingly grave to an increasing number of people. As Yamamoto points out, those supporting a neutralist stance in Japan succeeded in propagating the idea that the US military presence would increase the threat of entrapment in a nuclear war.³²

Yet Kishi, as we have seen, was a staunch anti-communist and supported the "free world" in the struggle against communism; his desire to chart a more neutral course for his country was therefore not a result of sympathy toward

communism. In designing Japan's security measures, Kishi had to pursue a delicate balancing act between the threats of direct and indirect aggression, on the one hand, and the threat of entrapment in war, on the other. To begin with, the threats of direct and indirect aggression were still high on the agenda of political elites in the late 1950s. Coupled with the USSR's success in the hydrogen bomb test (August 1953) earlier in the decade, the Soviet development of ICBM missiles and Sputnik I launch in October 1957 – the so-called “Sputnik shock” – highlighted the threat posed by an increasingly confident and technologically capable Soviet Union. Domestically, too, Kishi was concerned about communist subversion – his unsuccessful attempt to introduce a bill to revise the Police Duties Law in October 1958 is a case in point. Designed to enhance police powers of warrantless search and seizure ahead of the anticipated struggle surrounding the treaty revision, by introducing the bill Kishi sought to mitigate the danger posed by the threat of communist disruption.³³ One way to meet these threats was, as before, to maintain public order at home and cooperation with the United States abroad. But now, Kishi had to ensure that Japan was not thrown into a war it did not want to fight: it is in this context we should see his declaration in parliament that Article 9 did not allow Japan to exercise collective defense, and his attempt to guarantee that the US military would be used for well-defined purposes and in line with the UN charter.³⁴

It is important to note that I do not argue that Kishi's measures to secure Japan – and how these evolved with time – were the sole outcome of his conscious threat perception. In designing these various moves, Kishi, like Yoshida before him, had to accommodate US negotiating points as well as various demands from rival factions within his own party. For example, Konō, a faction leader, wanted Kishi to clarify the right of veto Japan would have during consultations with the United States prior to the use of its military in Japan in a clear reference to the threat of entrapment. Yoshida too was not enthusiastic about treaty revision at first. As Kitaoka points out, Yoshida thought that in an interdependent world, no country can provide for its security by itself, and hence terms such as “equal” relationship and “autonomous” status for Japan were unhelpful.³⁵ Ultimately, however, after Yoshida had removed his initial objection to treaty revision, three factions headed by Kishi, Satō, and Ikeda came together in support of the revised treaty, in what became an “important moment in postwar politics.”³⁶ That is, the final agreement about treaty revision was, to some extent, a result of negotiations with both external and domestic actors. But underlying the various negotiating positions of those involved, I suggest, were actors' diverse threat perceptions and vulnerabilities.

Fast forward to the late 1960s, the threat of nuclear war was countered as existential because of a heightened sense of vulnerability related to Japan's worsening position in an increasingly nuclear world, where the new powers of France and China joined the nuclear club of the United States, USSR, and the United Kingdom, and where nuclear testing continued throughout the 1960s after a short hiatus in 1959–1960.³⁷ Here, a fifth threat of abandonment by the United States plays an increasingly important role in the minds of key Japanese leaders. Two

developments related to the Soviet Union and China were particularly important at the time. First, during the 1960s, the Soviet Union had caught up with the United States in terms of its number of nuclear warheads and established a nuclear triad of bombers, long-range missiles, and submarine-based missiles, thus bringing an end to the United States' clear superiority in nuclear weapons.³⁸ Whereas the newly established nuclear duopoly and the Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)³⁹ prompted some to believe that the likelihood of a nuclear war between the two great powers was now lower, nuclear war was still conceivable. Recall Tamaki Seiji testifying that even as the prospects of a third world war between East and West weakened in the early 1970s, the possibility of a nuclear confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States was still an active consideration.⁴⁰ Tamaki's account also indicates that during the 1960s, the prospects of nuclear war were nothing but serious in the eyes of defense planners in Tokyo.

The second development was China's progress on its nuclear weapons program in the second half of the 1960s, and its prospects of developing a substantial deliverable nuclear capability by the early 1970s. Thus, for example, high officials within the JDA were aware of China's efforts toward loading ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads and potential plans to develop a small number of submarines capable of launching missiles loaded with nuclear warheads in the next several years.⁴¹ Viewed through the lens of Japan's atomic experience, and of Japan's lack of independent nuclear capability or defense capability against nuclear weapons, these developments amplified the threat of nuclear war and a (possible) nuclear attack on Japan. To some, this development also heightened the threat of abandonment by the United States. As a right-wing member of the LDP Genda Minoru put it in a party panel dealing with Japan's position on the Non-Proliferation-Treaty held on November 7, 1969,

It would be too late to consider the nuclear issue if the US were to scrap the bilateral security treaty and Japan were to withdraw from the NPT. I cannot be confident that the US would strike back at China's nuclear weapons.

A former JASDF Chief of Staff (1959–1962) and a member of the Satō faction, Genda was supportive of maintaining Japan's options in the nuclear domain open, including developing an independent capability in the future. And while his was a minority opinion, other members of the faction – including PM Satō himself as we have seen in the previous chapter – were entertaining similar thoughts.

In the second half of the 1960s, then, Japan's elected leaders had to balance another set of security threats: the threat of nuclear war – with a potential future attack against Japan by China, and the threat of abandonment by the United States in case such an attack were to materialize. The two aforementioned developments meant that elected leaders needed to respond in a way that would secure the country from nuclear attacks. Having obtained private reassurances from the United States about protection against nuclear attacks, in late 1967 Prime Minister Satō announced his decision to introduce the three Non-Nuclear Principles – no

possession, no production, and no introduction of nuclear weapons – while secretly authorizing the CIRO to study Japan's nuclear option,⁴² and while further allowing the United States to introduce nuclear weapons into Okinawa even after its reversion to Japan. Having eventually concluded against the nuclear option, the Japanese government then adopted the following additional measures: extension of the bilateral security treaty, joining the NPT, and unofficially, enhancing its nuclear technological capacity which would enable the production of nuclear weapons in a brief time (about a year) if the need arose. Taken together, this set of extraordinary measures, which became Japan's nuclear policy, operated to mitigate the dangers posed by both entrapment in war (three non-nuclear principles) and abandonment by the United States (extension of the treaty and enhancement of nuclear-technological capacity). That is, Japan's security measures were once against informed by various security threats and vulnerabilities.

The weight of each of the various security threats surveyed earlier did not remain constant throughout the Cold War period, with different elected leaders attaching different importance to different threats at various times. Generally, the threats of direct aggression and indirect aggression were countered most vigorously during the 1950s, the threat of entrapment in superpower war during the 1950s and first half of the 1960s, the threat of abandonment in the second half of the 1960s, and the threat of fanaticism countered most clearly early in the Cold War. By the late 1960s, as Japanese democracy seemed more stable, the threat of fanaticism played a decreasing role in the overall balancing of security threats.⁴³ Crucially, Japanese leaders likely perceived these threats not as isolated in time and space but in an *associative* manner.

Strategic preferences

The threat of entrapment in war and the desire to avoid it, as we have seen, led Japanese leaders to take a cautious stance in designing extraordinary measures to secure Japan. But it also informed how they spoke security. Moving to the questions I posed about threat perception-as-speech, while numerous studies pointed out the taboos on security issues in postwar Japan, less attention has been paid to the reasons why the taboo on designating foreign countries as threats emerged and why it was kept “alive,” as well as to the important exceptions to this rule. Why did Japanese politicians and defense personnel regard “state-based threat” as unspeakable? Which actors in Cold War Japan breached the taboo on uttering security threats, how they chose to do so, when, and why? Addressing these questions helps us shed light on Japan's threat perception as it evolved during the Cold War.

As discussed in Chapter 1, taboo speech is part of a broader phenomenon known as “word magic”: the intuitive belief in the power of language to shape the world and affect reality. Taboos are one way that people try *not* to shape the world. With this understanding of taboo as word magic, I suggested that by refraining from designating specific foreign countries as threats and enemies, leaders and defense personnel in Cold War Japan found one way of not affecting

three referents in the world: domestic constituents, political opponents, and foreign countries.

Recall we have seen in the previous chapter how Prime Ministers Hatoyama and Kishi framed communism in Diet deliberations. Hatoyama, who viewed Communism as a political threat, was also cautious not to frame the Soviet Union or China as an enemy in public.⁴⁴ And Kishi, who came to view the threat of communism as existential during his tenure, was still cautious not to frame the Soviet Union nor China as “concrete hypothetical enemies,” further emphasizing the need to distinguish between how to deal with a particular (communist) country in a particular instance and the threat posed by international communism.⁴⁵ By insisting that neither the Soviet Union nor China was “hypothetical enemies,” Japan’s leaders tried to avoid irritating all three referents: domestic constituents, political opponents, as well as the leadership in Moscow and Beijing.

It is worth reflecting on the motivation behind the choice of elected leaders in Cold War Japan not to affect foreign countries by designating them as threats. I suggest the desire not to affect a foreign country by labeling it a threat could result from at least two reasons: first, when leaders of state A wish to improve relations with state B, and second, when leaders of state A wish to minimize the chance of conflict with state B. Here I suggest that providing the analyst can muster evidence from behind the scenes to support such an interpretation, as indeed I have done in the previous chapter, in certain instances the taboo on state-based threats can point to the opposite direction of the Low-Perceived Threat proposition: it is *because* leaders perceive an intense danger from an entity that they treat it as a taboo.

The strategic preference of avoiding war informed how Japanese leaders interacted with leaders of friendly nations behind the scenes as well. In Chapter 1, I argued that *some* political leaders *some* of time exhibited strategic preference/motivated bias of distancing Japan from war between the great powers, which led these leaders to downplay state-based threats and particularly, the Soviet and Chinese threats. At times, Japanese elites were particularly concerned with the threat of entrapment in a conflict involving the United States in East Asia because of the presence of US armed forces on Japanese soil, which exposed Japan to Soviet nuclear aggression, and because they occasionally perceived the United States as unnecessarily aggressive. This factor reinforced the wrong impression among scholars and practitioners that Japanese threat perceptions were moderate or non-existent, while, in fact, it may suggest the opposite: it was *because* of the intensity of the perceived danger of war, and in particular – a nuclear war, that Japanese actors downplayed state-based threats to avoid it.

Few scholars have emphasized the role played by the preference of avoiding entrapment in guiding the thinking of members of Japan’s political left, officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the public on matters related to Japan’s security behavior. Tsuchiyama Jitsuo asserted that the risk of entrapment influenced Japan’s behavior during the first half of the Cold War.⁴⁶ Izumikawa Yasuhiro suggested that the risk of entrapment is one of three elements that constituted Japan’s so-called antimilitarism in postwar Japan. It is this “realist” element

which, due to the support it received among the political left and the public, played a role in constraining Japan from taking more active security measures, including refraining from taking on security commitments to the United States.⁴⁷ Combined with other security threats and vulnerabilities, I argue, the threat of entrapment informed not only how Japanese leaders including Yoshida and Kishi sought to secure Japan but also how leaders spoke security, and which threats were left publicly unuttered.

Probing the limits of taboo in Cold War Japan

And yet on a few occasions during the Cold War Japanese defense officials and politicians broke the taboo on state-based military threats even when evidence from behind the scenes indicates that they were genuinely concerned about them. These cases seem to defy the logic outlined earlier as rather than silence, intense perceived threats in private were followed by public warnings. Thus, as we have seen, during the second half of the 1960s, JDA Director-Generals cautioned about nuclear China in the Diet, with one of them confessing that “both the physical and the psychological threat [posed by a nuclear China] do not leave my mind.”⁴⁸ Prime Minister Satō, too, admitted – when asked – in the Diet in November 1965 that he felt a threat by a nuclear China.⁴⁹ These empirical findings raise another set of questions: Which actors in Cold War Japan breached the taboo on uttering state-based threats, how they chose to do so, when, and why?

The taboo on state-based threats was only challenged by JDA General Directors, in relation to China, and in the second half of the 1960s. At no other point in the early Cold War period, to the best of my knowledge, did Japanese elected leaders or JDA high officials *publicly* frame the Soviet Union or China in the Diet as a “great military threat.” I return to the uniqueness of the Chinese nuclear threat in the “Novelty” section later. For now, let me focus on why actors would challenge the taboo on military-security issues in general. To do so, it is worth recapping my argument so far. In the previous chapter, I argued that a careful evaluation of threat perception as conduct, speech, and thought reveals that Japan’s defense establishment and political leadership perceived the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as threatening and that these perceptions fluctuated in intensity and content over time, and among actors, and that segments of Japan’s defense and political elites perceived the threat of a nuclear war as a serious threat. I then argued that rather than indicating a low perceived threat in early Cold War Japan, these widespread perceived threats were partly responsible for the emergence – and the endurance – of the taboo on naming foreign countries as military threats in public. I would like to add the final piece in the puzzle, suggesting that paradoxically, this taboo as well as a series of restrictions on the defense apparatus, served to amplify threat perception among individuals across Japan’s uniformed personnel, JDA civilian officials, and elected leaders, who sometimes and under certain conditions, felt incapable of properly defending Japan vis-à-vis security threats, including the threats of nuclear war and war on the Korean Peninsula.⁵⁰ One way of addressing this vulnerability was

through issuing a public “fear arousal” message, that is, direct challenge on the taboo on designating foreign countries as military threats.⁵¹

Motivated biases

Whereas the strategic preference of avoiding the threat of entrapment was highlighted in the literature, the role of motivated biases in downplaying threats has not been explored by scholars in the context of Japan to the best of my knowledge. A motivated bias refers to the inference leaders draw for reasons other than reality appraisal, including the subconscious need to see the world in certain ways. As Robert Jervis suggested, the needs of leaders and their states can strongly influence whether others are seen as threats, the kind of threats they are seen as presenting, and the best way of dealing with the threats.⁵² Thus, for example, when leaders embark on a given policy, they will feel strong psychological pressures to perceive that the threats they face can be mitigated. When motivated biases are predominant, many of the beliefs that provide the reasons for the choice of policy are rationalizations. It is therefore not surprising that in Cold War Japan, left-leaning progressive intellectuals rendered the danger of nuclear war between the two superpowers to be graver than did the policy-makers, “who were relatively sanguine about the Japanese state’s involvement in a showdown between the US and USSR.”⁵³ Committed to the policy of allying with the United States, conservative leaders perceived the threats to this policy, including the danger of nuclear war and the risk of entrapment, as surmountable.

That is not to say that defense and political elites were oblivious to the threat of nuclear or conventional war. Centrist leaders wanted to avoid the entrapment in a war by distancing Japan from the possibility of such a contingency, while maintaining their pro-US alignment as means to defend Japan against domestic subversion and international communism. This middle-way balancing position between alignment with the United States and the threat of entrapment required skillful maneuvering, including the occasional downplaying of threats. At times, such underrepresentation of security threats incurred frustrated or dismissive responses from US policy-makers and diplomats.

Evidence from various sources indicates that the threat of nuclear war pervaded many aspects of Cold War Japan, including, since 1957, the political discourse as well.⁵⁴ The varied artistic expressions and popular culture representations of the nuclear threat during the Cold War period demonstrate the extent to which the threat of nuclear war permeated Japanese society. As Ann Sherif demonstrated in her book “Japan’s Cold War – Media, Literature, and the Law,” nuclear issues were a central theme in numerous films, novels, and public events, including the influential Hara Tamiki’s novel “Summer Flowers” (*Natsu no hana*, 1947), the film “Godzilla” (*Gojira*, 1954), and the various A-bomb Panels held in Japan and abroad (1947–1964). And as I showed elsewhere, the term “nuclear war” was the most frequently mentioned security issue in the Diet during the entire Cold War period.⁵⁵ As such, it would be a mistake to dismiss the impact of the nuclear threat on leaders’ strategic preferences or motivated biases, including on their

(un-)conscious determination to avoid entrapping Japan in a conflict that might lead to such a contingency, thereby bringing them to play down certain security threats in certain situations.

In sum, any comprehensive analysis of threat perception ought to be attuned to the strategic preferences or motivated biases of defense and political elites, including attempts to downplay security threats to avoid nuclear war and entrapment in other forms of violent conflict. To address this point, the analyst must ask whether a gap between public articulations of threats and private judgments of threats existed, and if so, what set of strategic preferences or motivated biases might have influenced the public articulations of threats. This question is especially pertinent in the context of allied relationships, as scholars of international relations have identified the working of the “alliance politics dilemma” in which both parties to alliance try to balance the threat of abandonment by the other with the threat of entrapment in a conflict to which the other is a party.⁵⁶

The views among *leading* civilian officials at the Defense Agency (JDA) during the early Cold War are a case in point. In explaining the reasoning underlying the 1957 Basic Policy on National Defense, Kaihara Osamu, a key figure among the bureaucrats of the powerful internal bureau, opined that “Basically, no country in the world will attack a Japan in which U.S. forces are stationed.” And even if indeed some country ventured to do so, Kaihara continued, “Then we have no other option than to rely on the Americans to take care of it. We are not capable of it, nor will we be in the foreseeable future.”⁵⁷ Kaihara’s judgment concerning the low likelihood of foreign invasion, I speculate, might have been motivated by his staunch support for defending Japan by relying on the security arrangements with the United States rather than by developing independent military capabilities. This motivated bias, and not objective levels of deployment of American troops in Japan, which declined rapidly between 1952 and 1965, might have played a role in his moderate assessment of the military threat of foreign invasion.⁵⁸ The fact that Kaihara both denies the possibility of an attack against Japan and considers it in the same breath, suggests to me that a motivated bias was in place. In any case, there was a schism between military and leading civilian officials as to the intensity of the Soviet threat.

Personal experience with the threat, estimated exposure to future threat, and an acute sense of organizational vulnerability

To explain why SDF personnel often judged the Soviet threat to be more serious than their civilian counterparts, we need to consider three psychological factors: personal experience with the threat, estimated exposure to future threat, and an acute sense of organizational vulnerability. Viewed together, these three factors help explain the perceptual gap between SDF personnel and civilian officials. As Tamaki Seiji has pointed out in his oral history testimony, field personnel – “the people at the radar sites” – were more intimidated by the Soviet intrusions into Japan’s airspace than were the civilian officials sitting in their offices in Tokyo,

hundreds of kilometers away. Since SDF personnel experienced threatening stimuli firsthand, field personnel were prone to register stronger affective response vis-à-vis Soviet stimuli.⁵⁹ While in some cases, prolonged and repeated experience of threatening stimuli can lead to decreased sensitivity to, or even to psychic numbing (where individuals or groups withdraw attention from traumatic past experiences), this, as Tamaki's testimony shows, is not often the case.

Second, because one of the two primary missions of the SDF was to resist Soviet aggression, the level of perceived personal exposure to the threat of war among uniformed personnel was higher. Because the purpose of the SDF as an organization is to defend Japan against external threats, its legitimacy as an organization is dependent on its ability to fulfill that mission. Therefore, its members are likely to be preoccupied about threats they might face. This organizational setting, then, was the context in which Soviet movements and deployments were judged to be threatening. Thus, the necessity to combat a potential enemy – and higher personal exposure to the threat – served as a “threat multiplier,” bolstering the intensity of the perceived danger posed by the Soviet threat among SDF officials.

Third, and relatedly, since the SDF personnel were operating within a particular organizational setting that incorporated the armed resistance to Soviet invasion, the perceived ability of the organization to effectively handle its roles and missions is key in informing threat perceptions among its personnel. Yet many members of the SDF believed that theirs was a weak organization, with an inadequate capacity to manage threats on the organizational level. Recall the oral history interview with Horie Masao, who served in a variety of strategic and operational planning positions in GSDF from 1955 to 1962, in which he testified that the Soviet threat generated a strong sense of danger because Soviet forces were superior and gradually improving and because Japan's exclusively defense-oriented military policy and its ban on building military fortifications on private land meant that, in case of military contingency, the GSDF would have had to fight off Soviet forces without the ability to mobilize forces over long distances and without adequate fortifications, leaving it “*totally exposed*.”⁶⁰ Or consider a similar statement made in 1963 by Nakayama Sadao, chief of naval operations for the MSDF, testifying to a sense of vulnerability because of inadequate equipment: “We will stand shoulder to shoulder with the US, but it won't work if we get pistols, and they get rifles.”⁶¹

To sum up, for members of the SDF, the Soviet threat – manifested as military movements and assets – was not a mere potentiality; it generated a palpable sense of danger, especially because military personnel would oversee a Soviet attack and because they perceived their organization as vulnerable and ill-equipped to deal with a military attack from the Soviet Union. For civilian officials in the JDA, however, the Soviet threat was less tangible, albeit a source of alarm.

The spatial distribution of dangers

While they perceived communism as an existential political threat, Japanese leaders in the 1950s and 1960s also believed that the Soviet Union was unlikely to

invade Japan with military forces (although it might attempt to harm Japan indirectly by relying on Communist agents there to interfere in Japanese domestic matters). Yoshida asserted in January 1951 that the Soviet Union would “never” invade Japan.⁶² Hatoyama affirmed in May 1955 that the Soviet Union would not attack Japan “without a reason,” and both Kishi and Ikeda did not perceive the Soviet Union as a high military threat either. Prior to the early 1970s, Satō too did not see the USSR as a high military threat.⁶³ The cognitive belief that the Soviet Union would most likely not attack Japan is central to the lack of perceived high Soviet military threat. Why did several of Japan’s elected leaders view Communism as an existential political threat while perceiving only a low military threat from the Soviet Union, and relatedly, why did PM Satō come to perceive a high intensity of Soviet military danger in the early 1970s?

To address this set of questions, I first reiterate my claim that the perception of threat is grounded in spatial thinking. That is, when individual leaders associate entities with a degree of danger, they conceive of this danger in space. To demonstrate this point, consider the following reflection made by Yoshida about the threat of communism, made in 1961: “At this critical juncture when Communism is making heavy *inroads in many parts of the world* (emphasis mine), I earnestly hope that Japan will continue to serve as a bastion of peace and liberty in Asia and, consequently, in the world.”⁶⁴ The spatial image underlying Yoshida’s framing of the communist threat entails a communist threat expanding around the world, as if advancing in space in various directions.

Throughout the period covered in this study, Japanese actors were sensitive to developments close to Japan. This finding is in line with previous studies which have pointed to factors such as the strategic or emotional meaning attached to certain geographical areas or the importance of geographical distance in providing “criteria for selection” of threat cues.⁶⁵ But rather than strategic/emotional importance or geographical distance, I argue that Japanese actors construed the intensity of the danger posed by the Soviet Union along the lines of a “spatial-distribution” of the threat, that is, how much of the danger is directed “at us” (near), how much of it was directed “toward others” (far), and crucially, whether the situation is shifting so that more danger is increasingly directed at us. In the case of the Soviet Union, elected leaders in-charge of assessing threats to the country’s security were inclined to judge the intensity of the danger posed by the Soviet military threat based on an evaluation of the Soviet danger in the Far East region and of the Soviet threat in other regions of the world (mostly in Europe).

The “spatial distribution” of perceived threats may help explain why in the early postwar period Japanese elected leaders did not perceive a serious Soviet military threat: since Europe was prioritized in terms of Soviet military power throughout much of the early Cold War period, and tensions there amounted, for many in Japan, the Soviets were primarily “looking” West and not East, and thus were not perceived as overly threatening.⁶⁶ Thus, for example, during a meeting with US Ambassador John Foster Dulles held on January 31, 1951, Yoshida told his counterpart that “there was no immediate danger” in East Asia; rather, he foresaw a danger materializing in Europe.⁶⁷

Likewise, the spatial distribution mechanism helps to explain why in the early 1970s, Satō came to judge a high military danger posed by the Soviet Union. The USSR was perceived as increasingly threatening because of perceived changes in the “spatial distribution” of the danger posed by the Soviet Union. On August 12, 1970, the Soviet Union concluded the Non-Use of Force Treaty with West Germany. Against the background of the reduction in US military presence in Asia – the Nixon doctrine announced in the previous year – and the Sino-Soviet military clashes of 1969, I posit that Satō then perceived a shift in the spatial distribution of the Soviet danger: a reduced danger in Europe and an increased danger in the Far East, including likely Soviet advance into Taiwan.⁶⁸

Few scholars have come near to this realization in a contemporary context although my explanation is different in an important way. In a study of strategic considerations in Japan-Russia relations, Tsuruoka Michito opines that “ultimately, for Japan, Russia is first and foremost judged by its actions in East Asia.”⁶⁹ And in a recent study of Japan’s security cooperation with Russia, James Brown concludes that “Japanese security thinkers seem not to regard Russia as a threat primarily because a clear differentiation is made between Russian behavior in Europe and in East-Asia.”⁷⁰ In contrast, my argument is that rather than caring solely about East-Asia (Tsuruoka), or even differentiating between the two regions in judging threats (Brown), in various points during the Cold War, the spatial distribution mechanism – how much of the danger was directed at Europe, how much of the danger was directed at Japan, and whether there were changes to this distribution – enabled or constrained Japanese leaders and strategists in their judgment of the intensity of the danger posed by the Soviet Union.

To summarize, the empirical analysis of threat perception in Cold War Japan identified considerable fluctuations in terms of intensity and content. In further exploring these fluctuations, and specifically the incidents in which elected leaders such as Yoshida or Satō perceived weaker or stronger threat from the Soviet Union, I suggested that an inferential mechanism related to the spatial understanding of security threats was at play. Theoretically, rather than Soviet deployments near Japan alone, it was changes to the spatial distribution of the Soviet danger – how much of it appeared to elected leaders to be targeting Japan (at self) and how much of it appeared to be targeting elsewhere (at others) – which enabled or constrained judgments of the intensity of the danger posed by the Soviet Union.

Novelty

As for the third question – why Japan’s civilian defense officials and elected leaders such as Satō perceived an existential military threat from China in the second half of the 1960s – I find that, unlike in the Soviet case, China’s development of nuclear weapons signified a dramatic change in existing circumstances. New risks, as psychologists have established, induce more dread than old ones.⁷¹ Even though Japan’s elected leaders were informed by the United States about China’s nuclear weapons development, the success of the Chinese nuclear program

created a new reality and generated uncertainty among those in charge of Japan's national security including, as we have seen, the emperor himself. The perception of an existential military threat from China among a few of Japan's elected leaders was exacerbated by the deterioration of Sino-Japanese relations after the Satō administration was inaugurated in November 1964. As for Satō, he became a target of Chinese media, which may have antagonized him even more.⁷² Thus, in the second half of the 1960s, the element of novelty in China's nuclear program development played a role in strengthening perceptions of a Chinese threat among segments of Japan's defense and political elites.

The element of novelty as outlined earlier suggests that over time, threat perceptions associated with state-actors acquiring nuclear weapon (say, North Korea's nuclear weapons development) might "lose" some of their intensity, as they are no longer experienced as novel. Recall, for example, Satō's statement in the Diet from November 1965: "Although the Soviet Union possesses nuclear weapons, in the current situation I do not feel there is a threat [from the Soviet Union] as it adheres to the line of 'peaceful coexistence.'" While Satō argues his lack of threat perception of the Soviet nuclear capacity is the result of Soviet policy, I suggest that it is the lack of novelty associated with the Soviet nuclear capacity that was crucial in shaping his moderate perception of it.

Integrative account

Let me try to link the aforementioned factors into an integrative psychological account of Japanese threat perception during the early Cold War.

To explain why Japan's threat perception-as-conduct fluctuated the way it did, and especially why did the government consider and adopt extraordinary measures in some points in time, I suggested that these measures were partly the result of the need for leaders to balance a wide range of security threats and vulnerabilities, a range wider than the threats of direct aggression (Soviet invasion) and indirect aggression (communist subversion), which were mostly countered within the remit of the SDF (and the police force, on which I had less to say about in this book). To mitigate the danger posed by the additional threats of fanaticism/militarism, entrapment, and (later) abandonment, Japanese elected leaders have produced a unique set of measures designed to secure their country. Rather than being a product of realist or constructivist factors, Japan's threat perception as conduct is better explained as satisfying the need to balance these various foreign and domestic, military, and political threats (and economic threats, although I had less to say about these in this book).

To explain why Japan's threat perception-as-speech evolved the way it did – why the taboo on designating states as security threats emerged, why was it sustained, and challenged – I suggested to approach this question from a linguistic perspective that takes taboo to be a kind of word spell-working: by avoiding framing foreign countries as threats, Japanese politicians (and defense officials) generally sought not to affect three kinds of actors in the world: public, members of the opposition, and foreign leaders of communist nations.

Zooming in on the third actor of foreign leaders, I argued the tendency to avoid labeling communist countries as military threats can be understood within the context of yet another threat: that of a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. As they were acutely aware of the threat of superpower conflict, and of the danger that Japan might become a target in a nuclear exchange due to the presence of American bases and military forces on its soil, Japanese leaders avoided aligning too closely with the United States and remained cautious in their public statements vis-à-vis communist countries including the Soviet Union and China.⁷³ By putting forward this explanation, I complement existing explanations for the taboo on military-security threats in Cold War Japan, such as those made by Ulv Hanssen and Thomas Berger, which focus on the first two audiences I mentioned earlier: the Japanese public and members of the opposition. The two existing accounts are helpful in making sense of the emergence of taboos on hypothetical enemies in the early 1950s (Hanssen) and on military-security issues more broadly in the early 1960s (Berger) but as a *domestic-political* phenomenon. A fuller explanation was needed, both because military security issues such as the designation of foreign countries as threats have international implications, and because the taboo on military security issues was not total; at various points during this period, actors did challenge it.

While the taboo on state-based security threats was sustained throughout most of the early Cold War era, elected leaders did frame the communist threat as an existential danger on numerous occasions, and relatively frequently as well – at least until the early 1960s when references to the communist threat become far fewer. Whereas elected leaders went to great lengths to try and distinguish the threat of communism and the threat posed by specific countries so as not to affect the world, such discursive sophistry can be challenged from a philosophical standpoint. If the threat of communism did exist during the Cold War, as many of Japan's elected leaders seem to have believed – and to communicate it as such in public – then where was it? Threat perception, I suggested, is grounded in spatial awareness, whether one is aware of the fact or not. As George Lakoff points out, “things that exist must exist in a location, or in a slogan form: to be is to be located.”⁷⁴ And while things can be thought to exist within one's mind or body, by declaring that communism was a threat, even in a strictly ideological sense, elected leaders made a claim to the existence of the communist threat *in the world*. Thus, despite the leaders' best efforts to the contrary, by affirming the existence of the communist threat (or any other threat for that matter), they also invited thoughts and questions from others as to the threat's precise location.

To explain why the taboo on state-based threats was challenged on a few occasions during the early Cold War, I argued that the emergence of the taboo had a paradoxical effect in so much as it served to amplify threat perception among Japan's uniformed personnel, and less frequently, among JDA civilian officials and elected leaders, who sometimes and under certain conditions – such as the condition of novelty brought about China's nuclear developments – felt incapable of properly defending Japan vis-à-vis various security threats. By challenging the taboo, these actors, therefore, sought to call attention to the danger at hand.

To explain Japan's threat perception-as-thought, I highlighted the role of personal experience with the threat, estimated exposure to future threat, and an acute sense of organizational vulnerability as crucial in understanding why SDF personnel were more concerned with specific security threats than their civilian counterparts in the JDA. To explain why threat perception-as-thought fluctuated the way it did among elected leaders, I highlighted the role of the spatial distribution of danger and of novelty.

To summarize this chapter, the psychological explanation integrates some elements of the realist and constructivist explanations. The realist emphasis on the regional military balance of power, the level of ally commitment, and the fear of entrapment, and the constructivist emphasis on identity, are subsumed under some of the psychological factors outlined earlier, including the need to balance various security threats and vulnerabilities, strategic preferences/motivated biases, and the spatial distribution of danger. But instead of ignoring non-material factors as the realist thesis does, and instead of underplaying material factors as the constructivist thesis often does, the psychological explanation combines both material and non-material factors to suggest that threat perception is best understood by taking the perceiver and experiencer of threat – the individual – seriously.

The psychological explanation of threat perception in IR requires a shift in the unit of analysis. Whereas both the realist and constructivist theses tend to focus on the state or society at large, the psychological thesis treats the individual-in-community as an important unit of analysis. This is for the simple reason that states do not perceive threats as unitary actors; people do, and, as this book has shown, their perceptions of threats often diverge and evolve with time. The shift in analytical focus gives rise to several theoretical and methodological challenges, including measurement issues.⁷⁵ Yet these challenges are not new, and, as this book revealed, they can be overcome by adopting a transfactualist commitment to the production of knowledge; by collecting extensive, high-quality data; by scrutinizing behavior, language, and thought; and by using a holistic analytical framework to interpret the data.

Notes

- 1 Importantly, the critical realist stance eschews law-like generalizations, instead abducting causal powers that may or may not lead to the same outcome across different cases. Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and its Implications for the Study of World Politics* (London: Routledge, 2016), 115.
- 2 The United States reversed its policy from democratization and demilitarization to economic reconstruction and remilitarization in support of US objectives in Asia. See Nick Kapur, *Japan at the Crossroads: Conflict and Compromise After ANPO* (Cambridge: University Press, 2018), location 190.
- 3 As well as the result of other factors such as domestic political infighting or compromise.
- 4 Shigeru Yoshida, *The Yoshida Memoirs; the Story of Japan in Crisis* (London: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), 163.

- 5 In 1954, a revised Police Law came into effect. The law recentralized, in part, the local police forces under national control. See Kapur, *Japan at the Crossroads*, location 206.
- 6 *Ibid.*, location 190–96.
- 7 Piers R. Williamson, *Risk and Securitization in Japan: 1945–60* (London: Routledge, 2013), 66–67.
- 8 Yoshida, *The Yoshida Memoirs*, 180.
- 9 National Diet Archives, June 17, 1955. House of Representatives – Cabinet Committee, Correspondence 5.
- 10 As Yoshida, *The Yoshida Memoirs*, 212 recalled in his memoirs, his first cabinet “was formed at a moment when our headquarters were literally surrounded by a red-flag waving mob.”
- 11 Yoshida, *The Yoshida Memoirs*, 1.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 2.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 10. It was these militarists who also targeted Yoshida personally because of his attempts to avert the war. See *Ibid.*, 13, 21–22.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 290.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 111–12.
- 16 The Eisenhower administration decided to reduce pressure on Japan to rearm in April 1955 and removed the numerical goals for the SDF. See Yasuhiro Izumikawa, “Explaining Japanese Antimilitarism: Normative and Realist Constraints on Japan’s Security Policy,” *International Security* 35, no. 2 (2010); Yasuhiro Izumikawa, “Binding Strategies in Alliance Politics: The Soviet-Japanese-US Diplomatic Tug of War in the mid-1950s,” *International Studies Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (2018): 113–14.
- 17 Thomas Berger makes a similar argument in relation to Japan’s frail democracy and Chris Hughes makes a similar argument in relation to the danger of entrapment. See Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1998), 63; Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan’s Re-Emergence as a ‘Normal’ Military Power*. Adelphi Paper 368–69 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 22–24.
- 18 See FRUS 1951, VI, 833–34, cited in Michael Schaller, *Altered States: The United States and Japan Since the Occupation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 35.
- 19 Yoshida, *The Yoshida Memoirs*, 111–12.
- 20 Yamamoto Akiko makes a similar argument, although only with relation to the threat of entrapment. See Akiko Yamamoto, “米国の海外基地政策としての安保改定 *Beikoku no kaigai kichi seisaku toshite no anpo kaijō* [The Revisions to the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty as the Policy for the U.S. Oversea Bases] “*Kokusai Seiji [International Politics]*” 2015, no. 182 (2015), https://doi.org/10.11375/kokusaiseiji.182_111.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 Takahiko Tanaka, *Nisso Kokko Kaifuku no Shiteki Kenkyū* [Historical Study on the Restoration of Soviet-Japanese Relations] (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 1993); Izumikawa, “Binding Strategies in Alliance Politics,” 108. For Hatoyama’s view on this issue, see Hatoyama, Ichiro. *Hatoyama Ichiro Kaikoroku* [Memoir of Ichiro Hatoyama] (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjusha, 1957).
- 23 While the JCP publicly renounced violent revolution in July 1955, and anti-ANPO protests have become less violent over the 1950s, violent labor disputes continued to erupt through the 1950s.
- 24 The threat of sliding back to militarism was less central in revisionists’ threat perception (than in the centrists’ threat perception).
- 25 Kishi, unlike Yoshida, was less preoccupied with right-wing fanaticism. In his mind, I hypothesize, indirect aggression and left-wing fanaticism overlapped to a greater extent.

- 26 Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*, 56–58; Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, Cornell studies in security affairs, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 14.
- 27 Kapur, *Japan at the Crossroads*, location 260.
- 28 See Kapur, *Japan at the Crossroads*, location 266. That is not to say that in advancing his policies, Kishi did not encounter strong opposition from rival factions within the LDP.
- 29 Some scholars have made an opposite claim, namely, that the revision of the security treaty was “not due to external threat.” See for example: Smith, Sheila A. *Japan Rearmed: The Politics of Military Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 26. I disagree with this view for the reasons cited above.
- 30 Izumikawa, “Explaining Japanese Antimilitarism,” 135. As we have seen, the treaty had only secretly allowed the United States to operate its military without prior consultations with Japan in case of a contingency on the Korean Peninsula.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 136.
- 32 Yamamoto, “米国の海外基地政策としての安保改定 Beikoku no kaigai kichi seisaku toshite no anpo kaijō [The Revisions to the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty as the Policy for the U.S. Oversea Bases].”
- 33 Kapur, *Japan at the Crossroads*, location 341.
- 34 Takafusa Nakamura, “Ikeda Hayato,” in *The Prime Ministers of Postwar Japan, 1945–1995: Their Lives and Times*, ed. Akio Watanabe (London: Lexington Books, 2016), 109–10.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 114.
- 36 In the sense that support for the US-Japan relationship was now a precondition for being elected party president. See *Ibid.*, 113–14, 117.
- 37 Arms Control, accessed July 16, 2022, www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/nucleartesttally.
- 38 Lorenz M. Lüthi, *Cold Wars: Asia, the Middle East, Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 351. While a source of concern for those aligned with the United States, this development had coincided with the relative improvement in US-USSR relations in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- 39 By the late 1960s both the United States and the USSR obtained sufficient nuclear capabilities to endure a significant nuclear attack and respond in kind: they crossed the threshold of MAD.
- 40 National Institute for Defense Studies, “オーラル・ヒストリー冷戦期の防衛力整備と同盟政策 [Oral History: Military Buildup and Alliance Policy During the Cold War],” [In Japanese], 2012, 43. <https://iss.ndl.go.jp/books/R100000002-I023690203-00>.
- 41 National Diet Archives, June 20, 1969, House of Representatives – Cabinet Committee, Correspondence 20.
- 42 Roughly at the same time the PM authorized this study, Japan's MOFA initiated a similar study group of the nuclear option, covering international security, technology and domestic politics implications of Japan's policy options. Former diplomat Yatabe Atsuhiko recalled in an interview he gave to journalist Aikawa Haruyuki (Mainichi Shinbun) that “young officials around me [in MOFA], such as Okazaki Hisahiko and Murata Ryohei made a fuss” about the security environment and the need to consider the nuclear option. Mainichi Shinbun, “Nuclear Watch: Humiliating to See Japan Branded a 2nd Class Country,” November 6, 2015, https://repository.dl.itc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/record/52361/files/A34172_summary.pdf.
- 43 That said, Japan's elected leaders were reminded of the need to remain cautious about sliding back to prewar and wartime right-wing fanaticism, often in tragic ways. Five examples will suffice here. First, on July 14, 1960, as he was leaving a welcome party to the new prime minister Ikeda, out-going prime minister Kishi

was stabbed in the prime minister residence by Taisuke Aramaki, a 65-year-old man affiliated with right wing groups. Kishi survived the attack. Second, during a televised broadcast debate on October 12 of the same year, the 17-year-old son of a GSDF officer attacked the leader of the JSP, Asanuma Inejirō, with a knife. Asanuma died of the wounds. Third, in December 1961, a plot by 13 ultranationalists to assassinate Prime Minister Ikeda and LDP faction leader Kōno Ichirō was uncovered, with 5 of the conspirators being former Imperial Army Officers. In 1964, a right-wing youth stabbed US Ambassador to Japan, Edwin O. Reischauer, who survived the attack. Finally, on the morning of November 25, 1970, Mishima Yukio and his four collaborators stormed the headquarters of the Eastern Army, bounded Lieutenant General Mashita Kanetoshi to his chair, and announced their revolution before a crowd of hundreds of unimpressed personnel. While Mishima's attempt at coup d'état ended in his suicide on that same morning, this incident, as well as the previous three, served as a reminder of the disruptive force of militarist, revolutionary ideas, that pervaded prewar Japan. In addition to right-wing violence, New Left student activists became agitated in the late 1960s as treaty extension neared.

- 44 See, for example, National Diet Minutes Retrieval System, House of Representatives – Cabinet Committee, June 17, 1955.
- 45 See, for example: National Diet Minutes Retrieval System, House of Representatives – Cabinet Committee, March 13, 1958.
- 46 Jitsuo Tsuchiyama, “Araiansu Jirenma to Nihon no Dōmeigaiko [Alliance Dilemma and Japan's Alliance Diplomacy],” *Leviathan* 13 (1993): 50–75.
- 47 The other two elements were pacifism and anti-traditionalism. Izumikawa, “Explaining Japanese Antimilitarism.”
- 48 In March 1966, DG Matsuno Raizo asserted that,

[China's development of nuclear weapons] poses an extreme threat not only for Asia, but for the entire world . . . the fact that it happens in Asia near us doubles the threat . . . as for development of nuclear weapons, having them means that there is a potential to use them . . . both the physical and the psychological threat do not leave my mind.

See National Diet Minutes Retrieval System, House of Councilors – Budget Subcommittee, March 29, 1966.

- 49 National Diet Minutes Retrieval System, House of Councilors – Special Committee on Japan-Korea Treaty, November 25, 1965.
- 50 For an example about nuclear war, consider PM Satō's remark to US Ambassador Reischauer in late 1964 about the need to “educate the public” about nuclear weapons. See National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 59, Central Files 1964–66, POL 7 JAPAN, “Telegram from the Embassy in Japan to the Department of State,” Tokyo, December 29, 1964, 6 p.m., in FRUS, 1964–1968, Vol. XXIX, pt. 2, 987. For an example about the threat of a second Korean War, in which SDF Chief of Staff Sugita was both concerned about the threat and about the lack of awareness about the threat by the Ikeda government, see Ayako Kusunoki, “The Early Years of the Ground Self-Defense Forces, 1945–1960,” in *The Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), location 2878.
- 51 The notion of “fear arousal” is drawn from social and health psychology literature.
- 52 Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1989), 24–27.
- 53 Williamson, *Risk and Securitization in Japan*, 186, 192.
- 54 Eitan Oren, “Japan's Evolving Threat Perception: Data From Diet Deliberations 1946–2017,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 20, no. 3 (2020): 15.
- 55 Ibid.

- 56 The concepts of abandonment and entrapment were posited by Michael Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Revolution: International Politics Before and After Hiroshima* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chapter 6.
- 57 Toshimitsu Kishi, *Kaihara Oasmu ōraru histori* [Kaihara Oasmu's Oral History] (Tokyo: National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, 2001), 20. Cited in Akihiro Sado, *The Self-Defense Forces and Postwar Politics in Japan*: 英文版: 戦後政治と自衛隊, trans. Makito Noda, JAPAN LIBRARY (Tokyo: 出版文化産業振興財団 JPIC, 2017), 51.
- 58 US troop numbers in Japan (excluding Okinawa) had declined rapidly at the time: from 260,000 in 1952 to 77,000 in 1957, and down to 40,000 in 1965. See *Ibid.*, 29, 46.
- 59 Richard E. Nisbett and Lee Ross, *Human Inference: Strategies and Shortcomings of Social Judgment* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 50.
- 60 National Institute for Defense Studies, “オーラル・ヒストリー-冷戦期の防衛力整備と同盟政策 [Ōraru histori: Reisenki no bōeiryoku seibi to dōmeiseisaku],” 261.
- 61 Cited in Samuels, *Securing Japan Tokyo's Grand Strategy*, 43.
- 62 Futoshi Shibayama, “The U.S. Britain, Japan and the Issue of Casus Belli 1951–52,” in *Japanese Diplomacy in the 1950's: From Isolation to Integration*, ed. Iokibe Makoto et al. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 18.
- 63 Recall his statement in November 1965: “Although the Soviet Union possesses nuclear weapons, under current circumstances I don't feel there is a threat [from the USSR] as it adheres to the line of ‘peaceful coexistence.’” National Diet Minutes Retrieval System, House of Councilors – Special Committee on Japan-Korea Treaty, November 25, 1965.
- 64 Yoshida, *The Yoshida Memoirs*, 291.
- 65 See for example, Raymond Cohen, “Threat Perception in International Crisis,” *Political Science Quarterly* 93, no. 1 (1978). Stephen Walt, “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Politics,” *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985).
- 66 As Lorenz Lüthi pointed out, after the Berlin crisis in 1961 and the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, “no major crisis rattled the European continent.” See Lüthi, *Cold Wars*, 357.
- 67 Shibayama, “The U.S. Britain, Japan and the Issue of Casus Belli 1951–52,” 18.
- 68 For Satō's increased perception of the Soviet military threat (“by 1972”), including his view of the Nixon doctrine and the likely penetration of the Soviet Union in Taiwan, See Yutaka Kanda, *Japan's Cold War Policy and China: Two Perceptions of Order, 1960–1972* (London: Routledge, 2019), 261, 269.
- 69 Michito Tsuruoka, *Strategic Considerations in Japan-Russia Relations in Japan and the Sino-Russian Entente*, NBR Special Report 64 (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, April 2017): 14.
- 70 James D. J. Brown, “Japan's Security Cooperation With Russia: Neutralizing the Threat of a China – Russia United Front,” *International Affairs* 94, no. 4 (2018): 867.
- 71 Paul Slovic, “Perception of Risk,” *Science* 236, no. 4799 (1987).
- 72 On November 25, 1964, the People's Daily featured an article criticizing Satō and his allegedly hostile stance toward China, including his response to China's nuclear test. Another critical editorial appeared on February 12, 1965, condemning Satō and his policy toward China. See Gregory Clark, “Sino-Japanese Relations – An Analysis,” *Australian Outlook* 25, no. 1 (1971). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357717108444397>.
- 73 This claim is echoed by Tsuchiyama, “Araiansu Jirenma to Nihon no Dōmeigaiko” [Alliance Dilemma and Japan's Alliance Diplomacy]; in Jitsuo Tsuchiyama, “War Renunciation, Article 9, and Security Policy,” *Japan in International Politics: The Foreign Policies of an Adaptive State* (2007), 59–60; in Samuels, *Securing Japan Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia*, 40; and in Izumikawa, “Explaining Japanese Antimilitarism.”

- 74 George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 470.
- 75 Janice Gross Stein, "Threat Perception in International Relations," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 380.

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