

Japan

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY


In 1853, an American gunboat commanded by Commodore Matthew Perry of the US Navy entered Tokyo Bay and forced Japan to open its society to the western world. This new reality marked the end of a 250-year voluntary isolation from world affairs by Japan. The Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) marked the beginning of Japan's rise to international prominence. After a short period of rebellion, the feudal Tokugawa government was replaced by a more modern one, and Japan's primary goals became rapid economic development and military modernization.

Between 1868-1940, Japan reformed all parts of its society, including the government, the legal system, the economy, the educational system, and the army. As a result, Japan became one of the most advanced and powerful nations in the world. A confident Japan even defeated Russia in war as early as 1905 and went on to annex Korea in 1910.

Social tensions followed modernization and the worldwide economic depression that began in the late 1920s. This allowed military leaders to become more influential within the government, and Japan became an increasingly militaristic society. In the early 1930s, Japan set out to control all of East Asia. It invaded China in 1937, attacked the US Navy in Pearl Harbor in December 1941, and conquered Southeast Asia and a huge part of the Pacific islands by 1942. The tide turned in late 1942, and the US and its allies defeated Japan in 1945. Japan suffered horrendous costs during WWII, including the loss of over three million Japanese lives and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

After 1945, Japan underwent a dramatic reconstruction process, supported by US financial aid and security guarantees, a more successful example of the nation building the US is attempting in Iraq. The US favored a strong Japan to contain the power of Communist China and Russia. By the late 1960s, Japan had become a leading economic power. By the late 1980s, it was the second most economically powerful country in the world, with the size and vibrancy of its economy surpassed only by that of the US. Its companies were doing well all over the world, and it was the world's leading creditor. Then in 1991, Japan was hit by a major economic crisis. A stock and real estate market crash greatly reduced economic growth, marking the end of the so-called "bubble



<p>Flag</p>  <p><i>The flag represents Japan's ancient self-designation, Land of the Rising Sun.</i></p>	Japan: Facts	
	<p>Capital</p> <p>Government</p> <p>Government Head (President)</p> <p>Economy</p> <p>Independence</p> <p>Area (sq. km)</p> <p>Population (millions)</p> <p>Adult Literacy</p> <p>Pop. Growth Rate</p>	<p>Tokyo</p> <p>Const. Monarchy</p> <p>Taro Aso</p> <p>Capitalist</p> <p>660 B.C.</p> <p>378,000</p> <p>127</p> <p>99%</p> <p>-0.139%</p>

Source: CIA World Fact book. Military data for year 2005 and Military % of GDP for year 2006. All others for year 2008. GDP figures are in Purchasing Power Parity. Tuberculosis data for year 2006 and Health Care % of GDP for year 2005 from WHO.

economy.” The economy fell into an 11-year recession, only beginning to rebound in 2002.

The government of Japan is a constitutional monarchy with a parliament divided into upper and lower legislative bodies. Japan's legislative system was established originally as part of the Meji Restoration, but was redrawn, largely by the US, during the Occupation after World War II. The head of the government is the Prime Minister, who is selected by the Diet, or parliament.

Japanese politics have been dominated by one party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), since the LDP's formation in 1955. Contrary to its name, the LDP is a conservative party. In Japan this conservatism tends to mean leaning toward the status quo, rather than particular ideological beliefs. While post-war Japan has been wildly successful competing with other countries in the global marketplace, internally the absence of competing political parties has translated into cronyism and a lack of competition. In 2001, Junichiro Koizumi, a reformist maverick, was elected prime minister. He added a breath of fresh air to Japanese politics by appealing directly to the public. Although Mr. Koizumi introduced many reforms, the political establishment managed to water them down and delay them. He also began a push for Japan to take on a stronger role in the international political arena. Because a Japanese prime minister can serve for no more than five years, Mr. Koizumi left in 2006, when he completed the maximum allowable term.

There has been a lack of stable leadership since Mr. Koizumi's departure. Prime Ministers Fukuda and Abe each lasted about a year before resigning. The current Prime Minister, Taro Aso, has made some serious blunders. His approval ratings have sunk even lower than the unpopular leaders he replaced. The next general election is required to take place by September 2009. Due to the weakness of the PDP leaders since 2006, it is assumed that the party will lose some seats in the Japanese parliament.

JAPAN TODAY

A developed country, Japan is a mountainous island chain located in the Pacific, off the eastern coast of mainland Asia. The country consists of four main islands (Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu) as well as approximately 3,000 smaller surrounding islands. Its total area is about 146,000

square miles, a little smaller than California but larger than some Western European nations. The population of about 127.5 million is heavily concentrated in urban coastal areas.

Japan continues to pay the price for its aggressor role in WWII. Mutual suspicions still flavor the relations of Japan's neighbors such as Korea, China, and Russia. While the nations heavily trade with one another, they struggle to move beyond the emotional scars created by WWII. For example, Japan's relations with the US are far stronger in many ways than with any of its neighbors. Yet the US was victorious in WWII over Japan, and US soldiers to this day remain on Japanese soil.

Japan was a devastated, defeated country after WWII. Amazingly, 20 years later it was transformed into an economic powerhouse. By the late 1980s, Japan became and still is the second largest economy in the world. In 2007, a Japanese car company Toyota, became the largest car company in the world, overtaking the American car company General Motors.

Japan is a large donor of international aid, second only to the US. Yet because of its role during World War II, Japan has not played a leadership role in world politics equal to its economic clout. There is reluctance among many Japanese officials to accept responsibility for atrocities committed during the war, so Japan continues to be distrusted by many Chinese and Koreans. A paradox is that, economically, China, South Korea, and Japan are each other's largest trading partners. So it is likely that the importance of their trade relationships will help the three countries find a way to overcome the tragedies of WWII. Indeed, the 2008 global financial meltdown became the catalyst for the first ever summit of the Japanese, Chinese, and South Korean leaders in December 2008.

Japan has sought a high profile in the fight against global warming. The country hosted the global warming talks known as the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. But like any industrialized country, it suffers from pollution problems that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Japan is funding research in alternative methods of creating energy.

Human Rights

Japanese people today enjoy a level of freedom and protection of human rights similar to that enjoyed by Europeans and Americans. Internationally, Japan prefers to advocate human rights privately. Japan believes that human rights are very much a domestic matter, at least in the timing and the path chosen toward their establishment. The Japanese can never take a leadership position on this issue for during WWII, Japanese soldiers often brutally treated people who came under their control.

Human rights issues related to the treatment of Chinese, Koreans, and others, by Japanese during World War II have been highly controversial in recent years. With the 70th anniversary of the Rape of Nanking in 2007-08, and with nearly a dozen films or documentaries in progress, the controversy is unlikely to die down soon. There remain disagreements about details, but most scholars even in Japan acknowledge that 80,000 to 200,000 people in the Chinese city of Nanking were brutally killed, and 10s of 1,000s of women raped, after Japanese soldiers captured the city. Another controversy involves the so-called “comfort women.” Again, numbers are disputed but historians estimate 100,000 to 200,000 Chinese, Korean and other women were forced to serve as prostitutes in Japanese military brothels throughout Asia.

Beginning in 1992, several prime ministers did apologize for Japan's wartime actions, and a fund was established for some compensation to comfort women, by then in their 70s and 80s. These actions, however, were widely criticized both by those who thought the government should accept more responsibility and by neo-nationalists who claimed that Japan had committed no war crimes. The latter continue to argue that these events were exaggerated by Chinese propaganda. They say that thousands of existing photos from Nanking were faked, that eyewitnesses and survivors of the massacre lied, and that the comfort women worked voluntarily. Respected Japanese historians have written about these events, but Japanese schoolchildren learn little about them in school, especially since textbooks have been revised to soften some of the history.

Child labor is virtually non-existent in Japan, as both societal values and the rigorous enforcement of the Labor Standards Law protect children from exploita-

tion in the workplace. By law, children under 15 may not work, and children under 18 may not work in harmful or dangerous jobs. Japan ratified the *ILO Convention #138 on Minimum Age* in 2000. It ratified the *Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention #182* in 2001.

Japan provides free and compulsory education through the lower secondary level, and education is free and universally available at the upper secondary level through the age of 18. However, teenage prostitution, dating for money, and child pornography continue to be problems. In the past, the laws against such crimes have not been very strict. But easy access to web sites through computers and cell phones make it easier for strangers to set up meetings with juveniles. In response, in 2003 a law was passed making it a crime to use the Internet for child pornography and prostitution.

The Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, creed, sex, social status, or family origin. However, in practice, women have not attained a status of equality with men in Japanese society. Women still trail substantially behind men in terms of job opportunities and political participation. Women rarely make it to top management positions. Their average earnings are lower than those of their male counterparts, and they are frequently the victims of sexual harassment in the workplace. In 1985, the Law for Equal Opportunity in Employment for Men and Women was passed. However the law is considered a “guideline”, and there are no legal penalties for employers who discriminate.

The unequal nature of women in the workplace is a cultural problem that often follows women into the home. About 20% of Japanese women have been the victims of domestic violence. Numbers are probably underreported, for women do not want to bring shame to their families. The problem is sometimes trivialized as an individual problem. However, Japan did pass its first domestic violence law in 2001.

Minorities and immigrants also face discrimination in Japan. Because of the largely homogeneous majority in Japan (98 % ethnic Japanese), integrating into the society is very difficult for minorities. Minorities include Koreans, Chinese, the indigenous Ainu people, and immigrant workers. These groups, along with the Burakumin (Japanese descendants of feudal era “outcasts”), are frequently the victims of discrimination in access to housing, education, and employment. Harassment of Koreans has increased since 2002, when North

Korean officials admitted that their country had kidnapped more than a dozen Japanese citizens during the Cold War.

Human trafficking is a problem in Japan. Several years ago a review of the country awareness of the issue was undertaken. The review demonstrated a lack of even minimum standards for prosecution, legal curbs, and victim support. This caused Japan to be added to an international blacklist for human trafficking. Through a loophole in Japan's immigration law, the country had become a target destination for poor workers. Women from the Philippines, farm workers from Indonesia and China, and desperate women from the collapsed Soviet Union were brought to Japan under entertainer visas. Originally meant for dancers and singers, the visa created a cover for bar owners running prostitution rings. Once the victims arrive, instead of legitimate employment, their passports are taken away and they are forced into situations of sexual exploitation or bonded servitude in sweatshops or restaurants.

In 2004, prodded by its inclusion on the blacklist, the Japanese government created an action plan to combat trafficking. The plan began by educating authorities on how to identify trafficked persons and proper procedures to follow. In the past, if a trafficked person came to the police for help, she often was either placed under arrest or she was returned to her "employer". The Plan also provided resources for assistance to trafficking victims, including shelters. The government improved the legal framework, such as drafting anti-trafficking laws. It also took a closer look at the number of entertainer visas from vulnerable

countries. For example, the number of such visas from the Philippines was reduced by 90%.

Environment

Like many highly developed countries, Japan has serious pollution problems such as urban pollution and acid rain. After several pollution scandals in the 1960s, Japan passed very strict environmental laws in the 1970s. These were followed up with additional legislation in the 1990s, such as the Basic Environment Law passed in 1993. Japan has dramatically improved its situation, in part by moving its worst polluting factories to less-developed countries. Another part of the improvement resulted from shifting 40% of its electricity production to nuclear energy and becoming more energy efficient. Japan is an international leader in environmental technology.

Internationally, Japan is extremely concerned about air and water pollution. During the final negotiation session on the Kyoto Protocol in November 2001, "The Umbrella Group" of four developed countries—Australia, Canada, Japan, and Russia—created a powerful negotiating bloc. Due to the Umbrella Group's efforts, the concepts of carbon sinks and emissions trading were adopted over the EU's objections. Through carbon sinks, Japan is projected to offset 0.6% of its required 6% emissions cuts over 1990 levels.

Japan has ratified the treaty. But as one of the largest producers of greenhouse gas emissions, it continues to search for ways to meet established targets. Japan is switching from oil and coal to the use of natu-

ral gas and ethanol. Natural gas emits less carbon dioxide than oil and coal, but ethanol contributes to ozone pollution. A Japanese company became a minority shareholder in 40 sugarcane ethanol distilleries in Brazil. This allows Japan to have a long-term supply of ethanol. Despite all of its efforts to date, Japan's carbon emissions continue to climb.

The Kyoto Protocol has a rule that allows developed countries the right to emit more carbon dioxide in exchange for helping developing countries reduce their emissions. Thus in 2002, Japan signed an agreement with Kazakhstan to help it repair its thermal power plant. Subsequently it has signed agreements with other countries such as India and China to invest in their energy industries and transfer energy-saving technology.

Japan has a system of universal health coverage that covers nearly all of its population. It is divided into two broad categories: National Health Insurance and Employees' Health Insurance. Membership in either program is compulsory. Private health insurance is rarely used in Japan. Employee Health Insurance covers people who are working for business, the government, or private schools. Premiums are based on monthly salary and are split between the employer and the employee. The average contribution is around 4% of the person's salary. Those covered under Employee Health Insurance pay 20% of their medical costs when hospitalized and 30% of the costs for out-patient care up to a specific maximum ceiling. Co-payments may also be required for prescription drugs.

National Health Insurance covers farmers, fisherman, the self-em-

Japan: Health

Birth Rate	8/1,000
Death Rate	9/1,000
Life Expectancy - Male	79
Life Expectancy - Female	86
Infant Mortality	3/1,000
HIV/AIDS Cases	12,000
HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate	>1/1,000
Tuberculosis Rate	22/100,000

ployed, the unemployed, and retirees. Its cost and coverage is similar to the Employee plan. There is also a national health program for people 70 years old or older. It is funded by contributions from the two main plans.

The principal health challenge for Japan lies in reforming its funding policies to meet increasing costs due to an aging population and a very low birthrate (8 per 1,000). For example, hospital stays in Japan are much longer than in some other developed countries. Increases in health care premiums have been proposed to offset expected cost increases. Current expenditures for health care equal about 8% of its GDP.

This public focus on health care is reflected in Japan's excellent rates for infant mortality and average life expectancy. Its infant mortality rate, 3 per 1,000, is among the world's lowest. Japan's average life expectancy of 82 years, is one of the highest for developed countries.

In the communicable disease category, Japan has a very small percentage of its adult population that suffers from AIDS, less than 0.1 per 1,000. This is the lowest by far of any developed country. Japan has a substantially higher rate of tuberculosis (22 per 100,000) than most developed countries. This is partly attributable to its post-WWII conditions when most sanitation and hospital facilities had been destroyed. However, after a long period of decline, the rate—as for all developed countries—has increased in recent years.

When avian flu first surfaced in Southeast Asia in November 2003, it quickly spread to other countries. In its march north, the flu was found on a chicken farm in South Korea in December. Subsequently, Japan reported its first chicken outbreak in January 2004. The country thought it had successfully contained the virus until a new outbreak occurred in January 2007. This recent outbreak was the deadly H5N1 strain. However, Japan's

outbreaks have been small and quickly contained. No human deaths have been reported.

Economy

Japan's economy moved from a developing economy pre-WWII to a developed economy in an amazingly short amount of time. By the 1980s its manufacturing methods were something other countries wanted to copy. But the explosive growth the country experienced from the 1960s to the 1980s came to a screeching halt in the 1990s. Japan's “bubble economy” was caused by financial excesses. Banks were lending money even though businesses were overextended. Companies were speculating in real estate, paying prices that were too high. A correction resulted in an 11-year recession.

The Japanese economy showed several years of solid growth until 2008. There are several reasons for this growth. First, Japan instituted some gradual reforms in the last decade. The biggest reform was to reduce the amount of corporate staff who were guaranteed lifetime employment. Contract and temporary workers cost Japanese companies about half the amount of regular employees. This allowed companies to work off the huge amounts of debts owed to banks. Second, global trade boomed after 2001, with Asian countries like China responsible for 50% of the increase.

With the global financial crisis, Japan's economic problems have returned. Its economy is expected to shrink by 1.7% of GDP for 2009. Japan relies heavily on exports to fuel its economy. With its biggest markets struggling—the US, the EU, and China—the volume of exports has nowhere to go but down. The government has instituted two stimulus packages to help its citizens and businesses weather the recession.

Besides the global economic meltdown, there are some structural problems with Japan's economy. While close government-industry cooperation fueled its growth for 30 years, that relationship now seems to be stifling competition and flexibility. Japan has failed to privatize state-owned businesses so far, which could help to reduce costs and increase competition. Thus the heavy reliance on exports for growth. A low birth rate and an aging population means that Japan will lose 35 million people over the next 50 years. It is tough for citizens to

buy more goods when there will be so many fewer people living in the country.

Japan participates heavily in international trade. It has few natural resources, so trade helps the country earn the foreign currency necessary to purchase raw materials for its economy. Many of its large export companies, such as automobile corporations, are extremely successful. As an international leader, Japan hosted the G8 economic summit in 2008.

Japan is a member of the [WTO](#). Per WTO guidelines, Japan has officially reduced its [tariffs](#) on almost all products, although the country continues to protect agriculture from foreign competition. However, countries complain that Japan maintains non-tariff barriers that limit access for foreign goods entering the Japanese market. Japan's protection of agriculture, along with similar protections from the US and the EU for their farmers, contributed to the breakdown in the Doha round of WTO trade talks.

In the absence of an extension of free trade initiated by the WTO, Japan has been forging regional trade deals (EPAs) with other Asian countries such as Singapore and the Philippines. But, due to lingering suspicions of Japan stemming from WWII, the region lacks an official regional free trade agreement. In 2005, Japan managed to hold the first East Asian summit by including such neutral countries as India, Australia, and New Zealand. There are other competing Asian groups that are involved in issues of interest for the region, such as free trade agreements. They include ASEAN, ASEAN + 3, and APEC.

When Japan's economy was red-hot in the 1970s to 1990s, production was outsourced to other Asian countries where labor was cheaper. Japan provided the loans

and technical expertise to younger economies, eventually including China. Thus, much of the initial growth of the Asian economies can be traced back to Japan. To expand trade ties, the country is now extending significant economic support to development projects in Latin America and Africa. For example, Japan signed EPAs with Mexico and Chile in 2008. China is also extending its reach into these regions. It will be interesting to see if the increased involvement will allow the struggling economies of Africa and Latin America to develop economically, just as Asia did under Japan's influence.

The government incurred a huge debt trying to revive the economy during the 1990's. Its [debt](#) is a staggering 194.4% of annual GDP, the largest of any developed country. The two stimuli packages initiated in 2008 will add to this burden. Taxes will need to be increased and government services cut to pay off the government debt. Small towns in Japan are already suffering from the budget cuts that have taken place.

Japan finances its development primarily through its banks using domestic savings. Until recently, foreign companies have been discouraged from buying Japanese companies. However, as Japan struggles to make its economy more competitive, this attitude is changing. From 2001 to 2007 FDI in Japan doubled. Prior to the global recession, Japanese leaders had hoped to double it again by 2010. Foreign investment brings in new ideas and different ways of doing things into a country, forcing change that cannot happen when business is done the same way year after year.

Security

Despite having the world's second largest economy and third largest defense budget, Japan has exerted little power regarding global security issues. That is largely due to its legacy from WWII and a deep domestic and regional mistrust of a more militarized Japan. It continues to pay penance for its militaristic nature during the first half of the 20th century. It occupied Korea and part of China prior to WWII. During the occupations, the Japanese military abused the civilian populations. Among the abuses was the kidnapping of about 200,000 Chinese and Korean women who were forced to serve as prostitutes in Japanese military brothels throughout Asia.

Japan: Economics

GDP (trillion)	\$4.272
GDP Per Capita	\$33,500
GDP Growth Rate	2%
Unemployment	3.8%
Inflation Rate	0.1%
Exports (billions)	\$678
Imports (billions)	\$573
External Debt (trillion)	\$1.492

Japan

Unlike Germany, Japan has issued only lukewarm apologies for its role in war crimes during WWII. Beginning in 1992, several prime ministers did apologize for Japan's wartime actions. A fund was established for some compensation to comfort women, by then in the 70s and 80s. Yet Japanese history books continue to gloss over Japan's mid-20th century military abuses.

In Article 9 of its 1947 Constitution, Japan renounced war as a means to settle international disputes. The article also states that Japan would not maintain military forces. Its military expenditures are less than 1% of its GDP, and many Japanese believe strongly in their uniquely pacifist declaration. Even so, Japan's military budget is one of the world's largest. Article 9 has been reinterpreted over the last 60 years to allow the development of a Japanese "Self-Defense Force" (SDF), which has become one of the world's most capable militaries.

Japan's legacy from WWII also affects regional conflict management issues. Scarred by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the US, and surrounded by distrustful neighbors, Japan pursued a strongly pacifistic policy from the late 1940s through the 1990s. In fact, the Japanese constitution, written under the occupying US government, required such a policy. To encourage Asia-Pacific stability, US troops have been based in Japan since WWII and in South Korea since the Korean War.

Japan was firmly in the western camp during the Cold War. Though it was never actively involved in any Asian conflicts during that period, it was often used as a base for US operations, particularly during the Korean War (1950-1953) and, to a lesser extent, during the Vietnam War (1963-1975).

The end of the Cold War in 1989 removed the threat of the USSR from Japan, but added to regional anxieties. A long-standing dispute with Russia over ownership of the Kurile Islands has complicated their post-Cold War relationship. The prospect of expanded trade and development caused Japan and Russia, in January 2003, to sign an "action plan" to accelerate their efforts to resolve this emotional roadblock. This one issue has prevented the two countries from formally ending WWII.

Despite these issues, Japan has engaged in the world community in other ways. It is second only to the US

in the total amount of foreign aid it provides. Japan also contributes 20% of the budget of the United Nations. Japan chafes at the fact that it provides more funding for the UN than four out of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. And, along with Germany, it is still listed as an enemy state in the UN Charter. For 30 years, members of the UN have discussed amending this language in the Charter. But it would take ratification by all 192 UN member states to delete this language. A proposed amendment will be linked to discussions of possibly adding members to the Security Council. The most widely promoted plan to increase membership is the Group of 4, or G4 plan. The G4 countries are Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan.

Japan is a member of the Six-Party Talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Since 2002, East Asia has been struggling with on-again, off-again normalization talks with North Korea regarding their once secret nuclear energy and missile program. North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in December 2002 and re-started plutonium production. It subsequently conducted a series of missile tests. North Korea's first nuclear missile test was in October 2006. Aware that a North Korean missile could reach any part of their country, the Japanese have shifted military forces from the north, closer to Russia, to western Japan, which is closer to the Korean peninsula. There is also on-going work with the US on an anti-missile shield for Japan.

In February 2007, a new agreement was reached and the International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors were allowed back into the country. In return, the US, China, South Korea, and Russia agreed to provide about \$400 million in food and fuel aid, plus security guarantees. Late in 2008, North Korea's leader Kim Jong II refused to allow inspectors to take nuclear samples out of the country. This froze the agreement and started a domino effect. China reduced its food aid to the country and South Korea refused to provide it free fertilizer. North Korea is struggling with food shortages, so these moves will make its crop shortages worse. But the unpredictable Mr. Kim has extended an olive branch to the new American president Barack Obama. In a New Year's message, he said he was willing to work with countries that are friendly towards North Korea and asked if a country representative could attend Mr. Obama's inauguration.

Even though China and Japan are each other's largest trading partners, China continues to be suspicious of the growing political clout of Japan in security matters. For example, China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has argued against Japan's possible membership. China in turn alarms Japan with its growing financial clout. China has raised Japanese suspicions in recent years by its exploration of gas fields in the East China Sea. Japan and China disagree over the actual ocean boundary between the two countries.

Since 9/11, Japan has assisted in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with logistical support for US and coalition forces. From 2004 to 2006 there were at least 600 Japanese troops in Iraq, involved only in humanitarian reconstruction work. This is the first time Japan has sent troops to a country at war since WWII. Japan has also aided the Afghanistan war effort by providing refueling operations from the Indian Ocean. The Japanese government's assistance has been criticized at home by people who believe it conflicts with Japan's pacifist constitution. In 2004, several Japanese civilian aid workers were kidnapped and one killed by insurgents in Iraq. Government approval for the refueling support expired in November 2007, and was blocked in the Diet for several months by the opposition DPJ. In mid-January 2008, however, the LDP was able,

through a very rarely used maneuver, to push through a renewal.

Japan passed its own anti-terrorism law in 2001. Within its own borders, Japan has experienced terrorist incidents. During the Cold War, North Koreans kidnapped 12 Japanese citizens and kept some of them in North Korea until 2002. In 1995, members of a religious cult called Aum Shinrikyu were associated with several serious threats involving deadly chemical agents. In one, 12 commuters on a Tokyo subway were killed and many more injured. Eleven members of the cult were eventually found guilty and sentenced to death, although none has been executed.

In recent years Japan, under pressure from rightwing nationalists, has been moving away from its purely self-defensive military stance. Debate about modifying the constitution continues. Under former Prime Minister Abe, the country's Defense Agency was elevated to the status of a full ministry. This gives the military more power to affect national policies and budget decisions. However, there are many in Japan who favor the pacifism of the last 60 years. Most neighboring countries are suspicious of any increase in power to Japan's military.

Japan: Security (Armed Forces)	
Military expense as % of GDP (2006)	0.8%
Military expenditures (billions)	\$45,841
Military expense per capita	\$360.95