

Answer to Question

Japan's New Defense Strategy

(Translated)

Question:

Japan has adopted a new defense strategy that it announced a few days ago, and this new strategy includes a significant increase in military spending. Does this indicate that Japan is regaining its military strength as it was before World War II? And what are its goals? Are they autonomous decisions or are they under foreign influence, particularly America?

Answer:

Yes, the Japanese government adopted a new defense strategy and approved legal amendments. On 16/12/2022, the government of Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida approved three defense documents; the first is the Japan's National Security Strategy, the second is the National Defense Strategy, and the third is the Defense Buildup Program. To say the least, Japan is turning the page after World War II and demolishing the state of defeat in which it lived through for the past seven decades, and now it is unleashing the restoration of its military strength. In order to understand the actual goals, we review the following:

First: Among the articles of this strategy:

1- According to this strategy, Japan announced the termination of the articles of the Japanese constitution that was drawn up by America during its occupation of Japan and has been in force since 1947. That constitution stipulated the deprivation Japan of military power and prevention from any military action outside its borders. Although the new Japanese strategy only mentions conditional "counter-attack" and excludes pre-emptive war, but it is the first time that Japan shakes off the prohibition of foreign military actions. This strategy includes doubling the size of Japan's military spending from 1% of GDP, which is the previous ceiling, to 2% (similar to the spending of NATO countries) by the year 2027, and this represents 10% of government spending (Al-Jazeera Net, 16/12/2022). Therefore, Japan positions itself as the third country in the world in terms of military spending after America and China.

2- This strategy also calls for preparation for the "worst scenario" in light of what it called "the most severe and complex security environment" since the end of World War II, and facing external threats. This requires the purchase of a large number (500) of American intercontinental missiles Tomahawk and SM-6, so that Japan is ready to respond to any long-range attacks

3- Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution stipulates that "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the state and any acts of aggression or threat of violence as a means of settling international disputes. In order to achieve this, no land, sea, air or other forces are possessed of military forces, and the state does not recognize its right to fight wars". This article has been revoked because Japan stands in front of a new war policy that requires wide internal transformations from war spending, military industrialization, and building an actual army that brings to mind the overwhelming military power of Japan in the period prior to World War II.

4- Ending the policy of peaceful coexistence adopted by Japan with its neighbours and with other international powers, the new amendments included the right of Japanese forces to launch counterstrikes against countries considered hostile. The new strategy included something like confronting the "evil trinity", even if it did not call it that, which is represented by China first, which it called "Japan's greatest strategic challenge" and secondly North Korea, which it called "a serious and imminent threat to Japan today", and thirdly Russia, which it harshly criticized for its

"willingness to use force to achieve its own security goals, as is the case in Ukraine ... and its military activities in the region of Asia and the Pacific, as well as its strategic cooperation with China ... and this "constitutes a major concern in the field of security." (France 24, 16/12/2022)

Second: In view of the international positions on this strategy, the following is evident:

1- China has strongly opposed and formally protested the strategy. [The new Japanese strategy, even before its official announcement, aroused the displeasure of Beijing, which constantly talks about brutal Japanese militarism in the first half of the twentieth century, of which China was one of its victims. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said on Friday, "The Japanese side ignores facts, deviates from its commitment to China-Japan relations and the common understandings between the two countries, and groundlessly discredits China. China resolutely opposes this..." (France 24, 16/12/2022)].

2- North Korea fiercely denounced the Japanese plan. [A spokesman for the North Korean Foreign Ministry said, "Japan... adopted a new security strategy formulating the possession of the capability for preemptive attack on other countries..." An official stamp on the new Japanese line of aggression has radically changed the security environment in East Asia. "The spokesman warned that Tokyo will realize that this is "a very dangerous and foolish action". (Sky News Arabic, 20/12/2022)].

3- As for America, [Washington welcomed this strategy. White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said that "Japan's goal of significantly increasing its defense investments will strengthen and modernize the US-Japanese alliance" (France 24, 16/12/2022)], and US Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin, welcomed Japan's release of its updated strategy documents. Austin stressed [the important alignment between Japan's national defense strategy and the vision and priorities set out in the US National Defense Strategy. (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat 12/17/2022)], and [President Joe Biden said that his country stands by "Japan at this critical moment, and our alliance cornerstone of a free and open Indo-Pacific." The White House considered that Japan's new defense plan aims to strengthen the military alliance with the United States. (Al Jazeera Net, 16/12/2022)].

Third: This is the new strategic plan for Japanese defense, by scrutinizing it, we find the following:

1- Japan's adoption of a new defense strategy, which was announced on 16/12/2022, was not surprising, although it was a major event that ended more than seven decades of Japanese weakness. The Japanese Ministry of Defense had published on 22/7/2022 titled the White Paper and it showed the defense policies that must be followed to respond to international challenges. The White Paper report ended that situation presenting Japan's vision of the threats it faces, such as China's growing military power and the dangers of the latter launching a war on Taiwan, the dangers of Chinese military cooperation with Russia, the dangers of China, Russia and North Korea igniting a war in Asia, and the emphasis of this Ministry of Defense paper on the importance of increasing military spending to confront these threats and investing in military technology and the need to build a multidimensional military force that includes space is evidence that Japan's ambitions are high and may rise to shaking off the dust of defeat in World War II, and the need for Japan to catch up with competition in the Pacific region, including the South China Sea, where the islands are disputed between China and Japan.

2- Prior to that, former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was a major architect behind Japan's initiative to reach a joint Japanese-American strategy, focusing on the Indian and Pacific Oceans together, to counter the rise of Chinese influence. The initiative adopted by America included US-Japanese cooperation, as well as with the rest of the allies in trade, investments, and joint cooperation for navigational security in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and the involvement of both Australia and India in that initiative. (Al-Arabiya, 8/11/2017).

3- Therefore, it is evident from this new Japanese strategy and the ones before it that Japan is starting from today the restoration of its military power, shaking off the dust of the past, and preparing to fight in Asia. Despite the fact that Japan has always been a major country and has special consideration in Asia, it was the dominant country in the region during the early years of World War II, sweeping through China, Korea, and the islands in the ocean and others in Asia, just as Germany's armies were sweeping through Europe before both sides were defeated and Japan was struck with nuclear attacks, which is the only one as of today, when American jets dropped two nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 and killed more than 200,000 people instantly. Japan announced its surrender in August 15, 1945, a week after the dropping of these bombs. The Allies, led by America, entered and occupied Japan.

4- In view of the ancient imperial history of Japan, the restoration of Japanese militarism stimulates sentiments of greatness among the Japanese and is widely welcomed by the Japanese people. However, the long period of being distanced from militarism in Japan and the presence of large US military bases after the withdrawal of the Allies from Japan in 1952 until today, all of this makes Japan's motives to restore its military power not entirely internal.

5- Perhaps the immediate American statements in support of Japan's adoption of a new policy for its army and military alliances and its view of regional risks indicate beyond any doubt that Japan's militarization is the cornerstone of the United States' strategy to address the Chinese dangers in particular with China. America is moving its armies to China's surroundings, causing unrest and provocation around Taiwan, and is preparing for war with China, as announced by US President Biden when asked if America would participate directly in the war if China launched an attack on Taiwan, and he said: Yes.

6- Likewise, what was observed of provocation by the former President Trump's administration of North Korea, in addition to its incitement of the Japanese military's restoration, as the American president addressed the Japanese as the "warrior nation," prior to his visit to Japan in 2017: [...Trump was speaking before he began on Friday his long and sensitive first tour as president to Asia. The visit, which includes especially Japan and South Korea, is dominated by the North Korean nuclear threat file. Trump told Fox News, "Japan is a warrior nation, and I tell China and I tell everyone else that listens, I mean, you're gonna have yourself a big problem with Japan pretty soon if you allow this to continue with North Korea," (Marsad News - International Affairs - Friday - November 03, 2017)]. Thus, he threatens China that Japan can take military action against North Korea, as if he was speaking on its behalf! Likewise, the re-militarization of Japan, although it is a Japanese need in light of the new conditions in East Asia, yet it is considered a fully-fledged American plan. Japan has become the central country in the American vision to confront China.

Fourth: Now we can shed light on the answer to the last part of the question, i.e.: Are they autonomous decisions from Japan or are they under foreign influence, especially from America? Examining what is mentioned above, the following becomes apparent:

1- Japan has a long history of victories over China, as China represented the vast horizon of Japanese colonialism before America and the rest of the European colonial countries prevented it, in the sense that some of the Japanese history remnants remain full of victories still alive today and are represented in Chinese demands from Japan to apologize and compensate for crimes throughout history. Also, from an angle that is no less important, the Japanese economy, which is the third in the world after America and China, is able to spend on a policy of comprehensive confrontation with China, including the huge Japanese capabilities in industry and technology, which makes Japan able even alone to confront China if it restores its military strength.

2- But America wants it to do so within the framework of an alliance led by America so that the Japanese policy remains part of the comprehensive American plan and the tendency of power in Japan does not move to bring its memory back to the stage of enmity with America, especially

when America attacked it with nuclear weapons, as Japan has a long history of conflict with America... For all of this, America wants to be in control of all the details of the new Japanese strategy, when Tokyo re-militarizes itself so that this strategy remains in the face of China without going beyond it to remember America's nuclear attack on it! This American view of reviving Japanese militarism as the cornerstone of confronting China in Asia is similar to a similar strategy led by America to revive German militarism in order to place it in confrontation with Russia in Eastern Europe.

3- Despite all this and that, Japan was late in restoring its militarism, just like Germany. It is true that these people are active, but became used to leisure when trade and finance controlled their thinking, and dignity and pride took a step back, their leaders lost their desire for war and influence. Until Japan, as well as Germany, followed America and Europe, not much different from the vassals!

Thus, Japan (as well as Germany) was delayed in re-building their military by seven decades or more until America pushed them to do so. But because these peoples have a significant amount of vitality, the building of these countries for their military power, which can quickly turn into nuclear power, will make these countries in the not-too-distant future, sense its power and greatness once again, which will create problems even for America itself, and the conflict between them will become severe. Therefore, America is following this military strategy in Japan and Germany with watchful eyes!

Fifth: The one who contemplates the reality of the states that they call superpowers today, finds that they do not value goodness or justice, for goodness according to them is what satisfies their desires even if it is evil for others. Justice according to them is what makes them win the causes of others and dominate them even if it is excessive injustice to them. So, the scales of values for them are far from goodness and justice, as if history repeats itself when the Persians and Romans ruled the world without goodness or justice, then Islam came with the truth of goodness and justice, with the clear path, its day like its night, illuminating the world, and so came truth and falsehood vanished. Today's matters are like yesterday's, they will not be reformed except in the way they were reformed in the beginning, by re-establishing the Khilafah (Caliphate) on the method of the Prophethood, and may this happen soon, Allah willing, after this tyrannical kingship, as in the saying of the Prophet (saw): «...ثُمَّ تَكُونُ مُلْكًا جَبْرِيَّةً فَتَكُونُ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَكُونَ ثُمَّ يَرْفَعُهَا إِذَا شَاءَ» [Then there will be a tyrannical monarchy. It will be among you as long as Allah intends, and then Allah will take it away if He so wills. Then there will be a Caliphate in accordance with the prophetic method.] Then he (saw) was silent. [Extracted by Ahmad and At-Tayalsi]. The Mighty and Strong is Most Truthful.

﴿وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“And Allah is predominant over His affair, but most of the people do not know” [Yusuf: 21]

30 Jumada Al-Awwal 1444 AH

24/12/2022 CE