**Is Japan Back? Measuring Nationalism and Military Assertiveness**

**in Asia’s Other Great Power**

**APPENDIX: Cross-Case Comparison of Leader’s Speeches**

To compare Japanese nationalism across space, we compared Japanese prime ministers’ speeches to speeches given by the president or prime minister in seven other liberal countries: France, Germany, India, Israel, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States. We evaluate speeches given on the country’s equivalent of a memorial day or independence day. Those days include: France (November 11); Germany (*Volkstrauertag,* inNovember); India (August 15); Israel (Yom Ha’atzmaut, April/May); ROK (August 15); United Kingdom (November 11); and the United States (Memorial Day, May 31). We looked at speeches every five years over the time period of 1985-2018.

We evaluated speeches in three categories: security threats and tensions; heroes and accolades; and self-criticism and war remembrance. As summarized in the article, Japanese speeches (across all categories) are among the least nationalistic.

Security Threats and Tensions. Japanese speeches did not discuss security threats and political tensions. In other countries’ speeches, mentions of security threats varied significantly. On the more dovish end of the spectrum, South Korean speeches discussed relations with North Korea in largely cooperative terms. Kim Young-Sam in 1995 emphasized the importance of having “a permanent peace regime take root on the Korean peninsula.”[[1]](#endnote-1) Park Geun-hye (2015) discussed tensions with Japan over history issues, but emphasized “friendship between two peoples” and noted that the problem was “some politicians” (code for Shinzo Abe). Similarly, India’s leaders discussed Pakistan in generally collegial terms—remarkably, even after the 2008 Mumbai attacks. An exception was the year after the Kargil War, when Vajpayee (2000) said Pakistan “would be committing a terrible folly if it thinks that it can secure anything through the undeclared war that it has been waging against India.” The world knows, he admonished, “who has derailed the move to end hostilities” and “torpedoed” peace efforts.

British, French, and German speeches occasionally mentioned security issues. Britain’s David Cameron (2014) noted British troops in Afghanistan and the sacrifices they have made there. “While Camp Bastion has now closed, we will never forget that 453 of our armed forces made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in Afghanistan. We are safer here in the UK because of the battles they have fought there and we owe everyone who has been a part of that campaign our gratitude.” France’s Hollande (2014) noted threats to peace in the form of “extremism, fanaticism, and selfishness,” noting the challenges “in Ukraine, in Syria, and in Iraq.” Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel (2014) too noted the world is “confronted with terrorism, civil wars, imperial land seizure, and a renaissance of geopolitical maneuvering.” In particular, she called upon the international community to “stand united” against the “terror organization IS.”[[2]](#endnote-2)

In the United States, speeches emphasized past threats and generally referred infrequently and obliquely to current ones. Reagan (1982) said America must try to understand its adversaries – “to speak of them not belligerently, but firmly and frankly.” He pointed out the “wide gulf between our codes of morality,” warned Americans to never “underestimate the seriousness of their aspirations to global expansion. The risk is the very freedom that has been so dearly won.”[[3]](#endnote-3) Other American leaders discussed adversaries in more cosmopolitan terms. George H.W. Bush noted he was headed to a summit “with open arms to welcome the President of the Soviet Union”; and Clinton (1995) expressed hope for progress in US relations with Russia. Generally, American speeches were more cosmopolitan on this indicator than on others.

(Early) Israeli speeches discussed security threats in the most nationalistic and even chauvinistic terms. In 1990, Yitzhak Shamir (1990) noted, “People of terror, as well as insane and megalomaniac rulers, are still threatening us.”[[4]](#endnote-4) Yitzak Rabin (1995) warned of “terroristic murderers.” Subsequent Israeli speeches did not reflect such language.

Heroes and Accolades. With respect to the people honored in speeches, Japan’s speeches were among the least nationalistic of the comparison group. Speeches in other countries varied widely, with some showing a nationalistic focus on their soldiers or own war dead, and others honoring heroes in other countries, or highlighting economic achievements. Like Japan, South Korea celebrated its people who made economic growth possible. Roh Tae-Woo (1990) said that Korean “citizens rose up from the dark past and achieved an economic miracle.”[[5]](#endnote-5) Indian speeches emphasized political heroes who fought for independence, most of all Mahatma Gandhi.

French speeches reflect decreasing nationalism over time. Earlier French speeches emphasized the role of the French resistance in defeating the Germans (Mitterrand 1983) and France’s war dead (Mitterrand 1988). Over time French speeches included tributes to allied soldiers and leaders (Chirac 1998; Raffarin 2002-03; Sarkozy 2008-2011; Hollande 2014-15). The French later participated with representatives from allied nations, and also Germany, in Armistice Day ceremonies. For example, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin (2003) “warmly saluted” France’s “European and American allies,” and welcomed to the ceremony “our German friends.” Nicholas Sarkozy (2008) listed the allied nations whose children also “fought on her soil like they would have fought on the soil of their own homeland.” In 2011 Sarkozy declared, “What was built for us by Winston Churchill, Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet, Alcide de Gasperi, Konrad Adenauer and General de Gaulle is our most precious asset.”[[6]](#endnote-6) In 2014, Francois Hollande unveiled a memorial in northern France that honors the war dead from all sides. The memorial displays nearly 600,000 names of the war dead, of all nationalities, displayed in alphabetical order. In a ceremony joined by German, British, and Belgian officials, Hollande declared, “Enemies yesterday, these men are now united in death as if they belonged to the same family.”[[7]](#endnote-7)

German speeches –by far the least nationalistic of the group – actually celebrate former enemies for defeating Germany. In 1985 President Richard von Weizsacker (1985) called May 8 “a day of liberation”: defeat “liberated all of us from the inhumanity and tyranny of the

National-Socialist regime.”[[8]](#endnote-8) This view of liberation has persisted; in 2015 President Joachim Gauck characterized Germany’s World War II defeat as “liberating us Germans from the Nazi dictatorship.” Germans should be grateful, said Gauck, “for this self-sacrificing battle by our former opponents in the East and West. Their struggle made it possible for us to live in peace and dignity in Germany today. Who would not be grateful for this?”[[9]](#endnote-9)

British and Israeli speeches reflect a more nationalistic emphasis on their military heroes. Margaret Thatcher (1979) lamented the “disabled and bereaved in two world wars, and those who made the ultimate sacrifice and gave their lives.”[[10]](#endnote-10) David Cameron (2011) later praised “the incredible courage and sacrifice of generations of British service men and women who have given their lives to protect the freedoms that we enjoy today.”[[11]](#endnote-11) Three years later, Cameron said, “we will never forget that 453 of our armed forces made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in Afghanistan. We are safer here in the UK because of the battles they have fought there...”[[12]](#endnote-12) Israeli speeches also praised the country’s war dead (Shamir 1990; Rabin 1995; Barak 2000; Netanyahu 2010). For example, as Ariel Sharon said in 2005, “They deserve eternal gratitude, eternal praise. The glory of Israel…was achieved thanks to them.”

American speeches, like Israeli ones, emphasize individual soldiers’ heroism, often singling out a few men and telling their stories.[[13]](#endnote-13) Ronald Reagan (1984) spoke at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier: “He saw the horrors of war,” Reagan said, “but bravely faced them, certain his cause and his country’s cause was a noble one…” Barack Obama (2012) praised that American soldiers “defeated fascism and laid the foundation for decades of prosperity,” and “forged alliances that won a long cold war.” American speeches did not mention combatants on the other side—even those that had become close US allies. For example, fifty years after the war, when Bill Clinton (1995) discussed Okinawa (“the bloodiest battle in the Far East”), he said, “that small island would claim the lives of more than 12,000 Americans. Still, our forces never faltered.” Though upwards of 150~200,000 Japanese people perished during the battle for Okinawa, Clinton did not mention any suffering by the soldiers and people of Japan—a close U.S. ally for a half-century.[[14]](#endnote-14) In sum, Japanese speeches rank among the least nationalistic in terms of the heroes singled out and praised.

Self-Criticism and War Remembrance. Only three countries (Japan, France, and Germany) engaged in self-criticism in their speeches. In particular, German speeches reflect a strong commitment to remembering the horrors of World War II. Richard Von Weizsacker (1985) lamented in his landmark address, “the inhuman goals of [Germany’s] criminal regime.” He enumerated specific German atrocities and the suffering of other peoples endured at German hands.[[15]](#endnote-15) Such self-reflection and contrition continued in German speeches upon the sixtieth and the seventieth anniversary of the war. For example, Kohler’s 2005 speech similarly detailed the long list of German violence. “It is with horror and shame that we Germans look back on the Second World War that Germany unleashed and on the Holocaust, the brutal perversion of all civilized values perpetrated by Germans.”

Over time, French speeches reflect more self-criticism about France’s misdeeds *toward Frenchmen*. For decades (until 1992), French presidents on Armistice Day laid wreaths on the tomb of Marshal Philippe Petain. Though they were honoring his heroism in World War I, critics objected given Petain’s (and France’s) collaboration during the war.[[16]](#endnote-16) In his 1995 speech on Armistice Day, President Jacques Chirac lamented how the French collaborated with the Nazis to send more than 76,000 French Jews to their deaths. “France, home of the Enlightenment and the Rights of Man,” Chirac said, “broke her word and delivered the people she was protecting to their executioners.”[[17]](#endnote-17) FrançoisHollande echoed this theme in 2014: “We owe the Jewish martyrs the truth about what happened 70 years ago. The truth is that a crime was committed in France by France.”[[18]](#endnote-18) Hollande also encouraged a conversation about the sensitive topic of 600 French soldiers shot in a firing squad for disobedience, characterizing them not as traitors but as victims of the horror of war.[[19]](#endnote-19) A few years earlier, however, Nicholas Sarkozy (2010) embraced the familiar French narrative that emphasized resistance rather than collaboration. Sarkozy recalled young people who resisted during the war, who “said ‘no’ to defeat, ‘no’ to collaboration and ‘no’ to dishonor”; those “French young people publicly answered the appeal to resistance issued a few months earlier by General de Gaulle.”[[20]](#endnote-20)

French and German speeches remember war as a tragedy for all sides. For example, Lionel Jospin (1998) described World War I as “an explosion that shook the foundations of the European continent. Each village had its dead, its widows and its orphans.” Nicholas Sarkozy (2009) described war as “murderous folly,” “absurdity,” and “suicidal.” He says that they “pay tribute before this tomb not to celebrate their past glory, but so that no one forgets where men’s folly can lead.” That year, Sarkozy observed Armistice Day alongside German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Sarkozy said that they honored “not the victory of one people over another, but hardship that was as terrible for one side as it was for the other.” He acknowledged German suffering during the war: “German orphans cried over the death of their fathers in combat just as French orphans did,” he said. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who accompanied Sarkozy to Paris’s Arc du Triomphe, sounded a similarly reconciliatory and cosmopolitan note. “The Germans and the French, once bitter enemies, now stand united as neighbors in a way that nourishes hope and confidence that elsewhere in the world, too, deep trenches can be bridged and overcome.”[[21]](#endnote-21)

Germans remember the war as suffering and tyranny, not just for the victims of war fighting but also for those who were oppressed and killed because of their beliefs and who they were. This led to German conviction to defend human rights — a recurring theme in many of the speeches. President Richard von Weiszacker (1985) mourned for “all the dead of the war and tyranny.” He paid special tribute to “ the six million Jews who were murdered in German concentration camps” and “the countless citizens of the Soviet Union and Poland.” His list continued to include the Romany Gypsies, homosexuals, mentally ill who were killed and the victims of “the resistance movements in all the countries occupied by us.”[[22]](#endnote-22) President Joachim Gauck (2015) went as far as thanking the former opponents in the East and West who liberated the Germans from the Nazi dictatorship. “Their struggle made it possible for us to live in peace and dignity in Germany today.”[[23]](#endnote-23)

Other countries’ speeches reflected no self-criticism. Ronald Reagan (1984), while mourning at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, mentioned the lessons of war only to dismiss them: “Let us, if we must, debate the lessons learned at some other time.” Instead of self-criticism, speeches were far more prone to feature self-congratulation. South Korea’s President Park (2015) described the country’s economic “Miracle on the Han River” as a “beacon of hope for many developing countries.”[[24]](#endnote-24) India’s Singh (2010) called India “an example for many other countries to emulate” and a country “viewed with respect all over the world,” whose views “command attention in international fora.”[[25]](#endnote-25)

War remembrance in other countries emphasized the contributions and triumphs of their own soldiers. For example, Obama (2010) said, thanks to American soldiers, “A country was liberated. A Holocaust was over. A town was rid of insurgents. A village was finally free from the terror of violent extremists.” When American speeches remember war, they emphasize accomplishments and victories.

Israeli speeches emphasized the pain of war, and the memory of war as a commitment to defending peace. “You find no comfort, no cure to your pain,” said Rabin (1995). “The same is true for us [leaders].” Sharon (2005) described war as solidifying Israel’s commitment to peace. He said: “Whoever experienced it, whoever was in the scene of horror, under the hail of bullets and shells; whoever carried in his arms a person critically injured, a brother in arms, and felt the warmth of his blood, his final breath; whoever saw and felt closely the most terrible price of the damn war – will vow to do everything in order to prevent the price of war from the next generation.” Benjamin Netanyahu (2010) remembered the sacrifice of soldiers as defending the homeland: “It was not out of a lust for battle that they charged this destination and other hills, but out of faith in the justness of the cause of defending the one and only country of the Jewish people.”

The Korean speeches remember those who fought for independence from Japan, but South Koreans focus on the Korean War, remembered as a national tragedy and triumph. The Koreans had to fight their brothers in a “fratricidal war” said President Kim Young-sam (1995).[[26]](#endnote-26) Kim Dae-jung reiterated in 2000: “Our land was divided, we killed each other in war ... we have aimed our guns at our brothers and sisters across the Armistice Line in prolonged hostilities and confrontation.”[[27]](#endnote-27) “The tragedy of our division and the ravages of the Korean War completely swept away the livelihood of our people” commiserated President Park Geun-hye in 2015. But the memory is also a triumphant one. “We sprang up in rage, however, with the fiery fighting spirit and the iron will which cut down the fetters of colonial rule,” declared Kim Young-sam in 1995.[[28]](#endnote-28) “Meeting the tragedy of the Korean War head on we defended the Republic fighting alongside freedom-loving friends from around the world,” stated President Lee Myung-bak in 2010. Yet, the war is not yet over. The speeches often remark on the “genuine liberation” as did Lee (2010). “We will be truly liberated only when all the people of the South and North build a unified state blessed with freedom and prosperity.”[[29]](#endnote-29)

In sum, Japanese speeches are among the least nationalistic of the group. Japanese speeches increasingly honor not only Japan’s war dead but the sacrifices of other countries, and the suffering of foreign victims of Japanese violence. As they remember Japan’s national rejuvenation after the war, they increasingly praise not only the Japanese people but also the generosity of the global community. Furthermore Japan is one of only two countries to engage in self-criticism of violence it committed against other countries.

1. “Address by President Roh Tae-Woo on the 45th anniversary of Liberation,” August 15, 1990. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Speech by Federal Chancellor Merkel on the occasion of the celebration of the Day of German Unity on October 3, 2014 in Hannover. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Ronald Reagan: “Remarks at Memorial Day Ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery,” May 31, 1982. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=42585 (All Internet sources are accessed on April 15, 2021). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. PM Shamir's Remarks at the Yad LaBanim Memorial Service for Israel’s Fallen Soldiers, April 26, 1990. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. “Address by President Roh Tae-Woo on the 45th anniversary of Liberation,” August 15, 1990. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Speech by French President Nicholas Sarkozy on November 11, 2011. http://ambafrance-us.org/spip.php?article2901 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. “Hollande Opens Vast New Memorial to WWI Dead,” France 24, November 11, 2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. “Speech by President Richard von Weizsäcker during the Ceremony Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the End of War in Europe and of National-Socialist Tyranny on 8 May 1985.”

   https://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Reden/2015/02/150202-RvW-Rede-8-Mai-1985-englisch.pdf?\_\_blob=publicationFile [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Speech by Federal President Joachim Gauck at the memorial ceremony in Schloß Holte-Stukenbrock on 6 May on the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Margaret Thatcher, Speech at Festival of Remembrance Dinner, November 10, 1979. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104166> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Prime Minister’s Message for Remembrance Day, November 11, 2011. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-ministers-message-for-remembrance-day> [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Remembrance Sunday: David Cameron’s message, November 9, 2014. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/remembrance-sunday-2014-david-camerons-message> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Speeches include Reagan 1984; George H.W. Bush 1988; Clinton 1995-2000; George W. Bush 2005; Obama 2010-2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Casualty figures from Alexander B. Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 121. However, in 2016 Barack Obama gave a speech at Hiroshima, Japan in which he described Japanese wartime suffering. “Text of President Obama’s Speech in Hiroshima, Japan,” *New York Times*, May 27, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Rede von Bundespräsident Richard von Weizsäcker bei der Gedenkveranstaltung im Plenarsaal des Deutschen Bundestages zum 40. Jahrestag des Endes des Zweiten Weltkrieges in Europa [speech by Richard von Weizsäcker, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, in the Bundestag during the Ceremony Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the End of the War in Europe], May 8, 1985. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Charles Truehart, “A Nation’s Nagging Conscience,” *Washington Post*, April 17, 1997; Peter Hellman, The Name of Pétain, Hero and Villain, Is Cleansed From the Streets of France,” The Forward, December 29, 2010. <http://forward.com/news/134313/the-name-of-petain-hero-and-villain-is-cleansed-fr/#ixzz43fB8x9nf> [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. # Quoted in Truehart, “A Nation’s Nagging Conscience.”

    [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. # Quoted in Thierry Meyssan, “France According to François Hollande,” VoltaireNet.org, at: http://www.voltairenet.org/article175247.html

    [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Angelique Chrisafis, “France pressured to remember WW1 soldiers executed for ‘cowardice,” *Guardian*, October 1, 2013.  [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. ## On the French “resistantialist” myth see Henri Rousseau, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994).

    [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. “Merkel, Sarkozy in First Joint Armistice Ceremony,” Radio Free Europe, November 11, 2009. <http://www.rferl.org/content/Merkel_Sarkozy_In_First_Joint_Armistice_Ceremony/1875203.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Speech by Richard von Weizsäcker, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, in the Bundestag during the Ceremony Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the End of the War in Europe, May 8, 1985. English translation from Geoffrey Hartman, ed., *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986). [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Speech by Federal President Joachim Gauck at the memorial ceremony in Schloß Holte-Stukenbrock on 6 May on the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. “Address by President Park Geun-hye on the 69th anniversary of Liberation,” August 15, 2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Prime Minister’s Independence Day address, August 14, 2010, at <https://www.indianembassy.org/archives_details.php?nid=1299>

    <http://www.narendramodi.in/text-of-prime-minister-shri-narendra-modi-s-address-in-hindi-to-the-nation-from-the-ramparts-of-the-red-fort-on-the-69th-independence-day-211475> [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. President Kim Young Sam’s Address on the 50th anniversary of Liberation.” August 15, 1995. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. "Address by President Kim Dae-jung on the 55th Anniversary of National Liberation,” August 15, 2000. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Kim Young-sam, 1995. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Kim Young-sam, 1995. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)