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**Alessio Patalano. "'The Silent Fight': Submarine Rearmament and the Origins of Japan's Military Engagement with the Cold War, 1955-76."** *Cold War History* 21:1 (2021): 91-111. DOI:

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Japan after its defeat in World War II underwent a drastic process of demilitarization and democratization under U.S. military occupation. Article 9 of the new Japanese constitution, which was mostly written by the U.S. occupiers, stipulates that "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes," and that "land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained."<sup>1</sup> This American idealism thrust upon Japan, which most Japanese people embraced for their own reasons, immediately faced challenges as Cold War tensions escalated in East Asia, and the Korean War (1950-53) prompted both the occupier and the occupied to accept the realistic interpretation that Japan's pacifist constitution should allow for self-defense. After the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the U.S.-Japan security treaty went into effect, Japan's improvised national safety police emerged in July 1954 as the Self-Defense Force (SDF) with land, sea, and air divisions along with a civilian bureaucracy of the Defense Agency.

For the past sixty some years, throughout the Cold War and the War on Terror when Japan has remained an ally of the United States, the people of Japan have continued to debate what type of military power would be sufficient to defend the country without violating the confines of Article 9, or whether the constitution should be amended to allow Japan a more flexible rearmament. This debate is intensifying as Northeast Asia continues to be a hotly contested region with China, Russia, and North Korea posing threats to Japan's national security. The historical trajectory of trans-war Japan from World War II to the Cold War raises many questions about military power as an instrument of national defense and statecraft, but the question of Japan's rearmament remains an understudied topic especially outside of Japan.

Alessio Patalano's article, "The Silent Fight," focuses on the development of submarine units in the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) between 1955 and 1976 and sheds new light on how the JMSDF navigated between the constraints of Article 9 and Cold War threats and managed to design an exclusively defensive military to protect Japan's sea-lanes. This article can be read as a sequel or supplement to Patalano's book, *Post-war Japan as a Sea Power: Imperial Legacy, Wartime Experience and the Making of a Navy*.<sup>2</sup> The article under review and his earlier book both emphasize the continuity from the Imperial Japanese Navy to the postwar JMSDF despite the sweeping demilitarization and the purge of the military leadership after World War II as well as the constraints of Article 9 of the new constitution. In both studies Patalano challenges the existing narratives of postwar Japan's reluctance in rearming itself, and he specifically refutes the existing

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<sup>1</sup> The Constitution of Japan (1946), Chapter II. Renunciation of War, Article 9.

<sup>2</sup> Alessio Patalano, *Post-war Japan as a Sea Power: Imperial Legacy, Wartime Experience and the Making of a Navy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

characterization of the National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) of 1976 as a revolutionary turning point that officially launched Japan's military defense program.<sup>3</sup>

In "The Silent Fight" Patalano not only illuminates the JMSDF submarine program's continuity from the Imperial Japanese Navy in terms of personnel and organizational culture but also demonstrates that the JMSDF officers were "active agents" (94) in developing Japan's defense strategy in the Cold War at sea in the Western Pacific in the 1950s and 1960s well before the Japanese government articulated the first official defense plan with numerical goals in the NDPL of 1976.

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Utilizing both primary and secondary sources from Japan and the United States, Patalano's article makes a number of salient points about the development of the JMSDF's submarine program. First, Patalano points out that behind the JMSDF's drive in the 1950s and 1960s to develop an effective submarine program to protect Japan's sea-lanes was the realization by the Japanese defense establishment, which largely consisted of former officers of the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy, that "the Japanese failure to appreciate fully the role of submarines in modern naval warfare doomed the country's war at sea and exposed the country's sea-lanes to a relentless Allied offensive" (94). The United States Strategic Bombing Survey also considered the submarine campaign against Japanese shipping as "perhaps the most decisive single factor in the collapse of the Japanese economy and logistical support of Japanese military and naval power." As early as August 1952, the Japanese government's investigative committee concluded that "sea-lanes defence was to be considered one of the core objectives of national security" (95).

Second, the postwar constraints of Article 9 and political, budgetary, and operational confines did not prevent the JMSDF from engaging in the Cold War in the Western Pacific to protect Japan's sea-lanes and shipping. The JMSDF leadership carefully and actively defined its own missions, capabilities, and doctrine under the Cold War alliance with the United States, in which the United States provided the nuclear umbrella and naval protection of Japan's sea-lanes in the international waters while the Japanese Self-Defense Force accordingly gave a higher priority to ground and air forces to protect the home islands within Japan's borders. Patalano, however, argues that "in the JMSDF efforts to develop a Japanese naval strategy in the late 1950s and 1960s, submarines were to play a central role (93)" against a looming Soviet submarine threat around the Japanese waters. The JMSDF painstakingly developed a seemingly exclusively defensive submarine operation by quietly monitoring and bottling up the fast growing Soviet submarine force within the confines of the Sea of Japan. By the time that the 1976 NDPO officially outlined the mission of submarines as surveillance and defense of Japan's three major straits (Soya, Tsugaru, and Tsushima) and required a minimum of 16 units, the JMSDF were already operating 14 submarines which had been produced through the four build-up programs since the mid-1950s (108).

Third, while Patalano shows in detail the crucial nature of the U.S. Navy's mentorship and assistance in technology and training of the development of the JMSDF's submarine program, he places greater emphasis on the fact that JMSDF elite officers who received education and training from the U.S. Navy mostly came from the former Imperial Japanese Navy, and that they were determined to build their own submarines suitable for Japan's specific defense needs by carefully studying and selectively adopting from the U.S. submarine technology. Patalano illustrates how the JMSDF under the constraints of Article 9 engaged in a silent fight to procure submarines made in Japan. After Japan raised its flag on the first postwar submarine *Kuroshio* (SS-501) in 1955, which was a loan from the United States, in the following year the JMSDF made a budget request for the first domestically produced 1100-ton submarine, *Oyashio* (SS-511), which was eventually

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<sup>3</sup> Although a few works, such as James E. Aure's *Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1945-1971* (Boulder: Praeger, 1973), uncover early postwar Japanese military activities, the existing studies in English tend to emphasize Japanese leaders' lukewarm attitude toward their country's rearmament in the 1950s and 1960s and consider the mid-1970s, after the shift in U.S. East Asian policy under President Richard Nixon, as Japan's first significant period of expansion of its own defense capabilities: Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations Throughout History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997); Michael Schaller, *Altered States: The United States and Japan Since the Occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Michael J. Green, *More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017); Fintan Hoey, *Satō, America and the Cold War: US-Japanese Relations, 1964-72* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Yukinori Komine, "Wither a 'Resurgent Japan': The Nixon Doctrine and Japan's Defense Buildup, 1969-76," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16:3 (2014): 88-128.

commissioned in 1960. When the U.S. Navy transitioned to nuclear-powered submarines in the second half of the 1950s, because of Japan's commitment to the three non-nuclear principles (non-possessing, non-producing, and non-introducing nuclear weapons), the JMSDF chose to develop non-nuclear diesel-electric quiet ocean-going submarines which were large enough to be equipped with a sonar and torpedoes and capable of hunting Soviet submarines around Japanese waters. In the 1970s, starting with the commissioning of *Uzushio* (SS-566), the Japanese increasingly pursued a more independent course in terms of technology and designing to meet Japan's unique needs.

The picture that emerges from Patalano's study is a story of successful cooperation in the Cold War between the United States as post-World War II occupier turning to protector and mentor and Japan as a junior partner trying to rebuild its own national defense program under a constitution that renounced war and war potential. Perhaps an important lesson with contemporary relevance the author offers in this compact case study of the Japanese submarine program in the 1950s and 1960s is that the success of U.S. mentorship and support depended on the occupied junior partner's intentions and capabilities. Another potentially more important point that this article suggests is the significant influence of the ethos and organizational culture the JMSDF inherited from the Imperial Japanese navy. The postwar Japanese submarine officers share "a strong sense of brotherhood" in a challenging environment and nurture collective responsibility with the motto "mind your duty, find your place (110)." Patalano's article reminds us of the importance of exploring a trans-war continuity in organizational culture of the military.

**Noriko Kawamura** is Arnold M. and Atsuko Craft Professor in the Department of History at Washington State University. Her recent publications include "Naval Powers in the Pacific at the Crossroads" in Tosh Minohara and Evan Dawley, eds, *Beyond Versailles: The 1919 Moment and a New Order in East Asia* (Lexington Books, 2021) and *Emperor Hirohito and the Pacific War* (University of Washington Press, 2015). She is currently working on a book on Emperor Hirohito and the Cold War.