Unbeknownst to many, Japan's defense budget is the second largest in the world (at $50 billion), and its military, Self Defense Forces (SDF), is one of the best-equipped, with an Aegis destroyer which is owned only by one other country, the United States.

Japan seems to have proven itself to be a docile cronie of the United States governement and seems to have lost touch with the will of its people and their desire for peace at home and abroad, deeply rooted in their own devastating experiences of WWII. In order to curry favors with the United States, it promised comprehensive support to the US which includes deployment of the SDF, more than $64.5 million for "US vessels' fuel expenses" and the use of the US military bases in Japan as launching pads for Kitty Hawk and other US vessels to fight the War on Terrorism. Although the Japanese Peace Constitution has prohibited its deployment of its own military, Japan broke the tradition with much controversy and sent six ships, the maximum allowed dispatch, to aid the US-led War on Terrorism this month.

The Japanese Diet passed the Special Anti-Terrorism Act this month to justify support of foreign combat, which has never happened before since Japan lost the WWII. The process of the legislation itself involved a complete set of ingredients for a derelict government: The floor debate was egregiously insufficient (which took a mere 33 hours in the Upper House) for a matter that would potentially turn its own Constitution upside down; the government released almost no information about the expected range of activity of the SDF as impacted by this legislation – but it is no surprise that the Koizumi Cabinet is defiant: one top government official was quoted as saying that legislation was not even necessary, but that "the Diet needs to simply approve the measure. What we do with it is solely our business."*

On the diplomatic front, last month Prime Minister Koizumi promised that to resume aid to Pakistan's military regime, which had been suspended since 1998 when Pakistan conducted nuclear weapons testing. This commitment of $40 million may be seen in the international community as Japan relinquishing its diplomatic leverage in the global effort for nuclear non-proliferation. While aid may have its merits, it is obvious that Japan chose to have more leverage in the War on Terrorism at the expense of its diplomatic leverage for nuclear non-proliferation.

Japan has exploited the post 9/11 national hysteria and fear of uncertainty to wield unprecedented state power, to the satisfaction of the US government which saw Japan's support as strategically, politically and economically integral to its bombing campaign on Afghanistan. Japanese Foreign Minister Tanaka has expressed Japan's intent on continuing support, should the war extend onto Iraq and the Philippines. What emerges internationally is a picture of national governments collectively dancing to the tune of the US government, defining security in terms of their muscles to instill fear and disempowerment in others as a deterrent of further attacks. The US-NoWar Network insists that the most powerful military might has yet to prove effective in eradicating terrorism. By drawing on our collective experiences as civilians during wartime, and *listening* to the surviving victims of state aggression and internal repression around us today, the Network firmly believes that the people who suffer the consequences of war are innocent people, particularly the poor, women and children. We reject "security" that is enforced in our name, at the expense of the fundamental civil liberties of the people driven by racist scapegoating, and the lives of innocent Afghanis, for peace and justice is a borderless value and a right that extends to ALL people. We believe in the right of peoples for self-determination, and support their struggles against imperialist occupations.

For this reason, the Network will continue to form an international grassroots solidarity for a peaceful solution to the recent 9/11 tragedies, as well as all other forms of terrorism and violence replete in the world today. The Pearl Harbor attacks precipitated events contrary to our universal values. On its 60th anniversary, the Network stands together with our API brothers and sisters to transform this legacy to that of Peace.

Japan's Peace Constitution:
Japan is the only country in the world with a peace constitution and a non-nuclear principle. The following section is the pride of its peace-loving people, from which the Constitution got its name:

"We, the Japanese people, desire peace for all time and are deeply conscious of the high ideals controlling human relationship, and we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world. We desire to occupy an honored place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace, and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth. We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want.

Chapter II. Renunciation of War Article 9: Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, 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. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

The US-Japan-NoWar Network is a Bay Area-based group of youths and adults of all ages from Japan that came together to form a progressive community to participate in the global peace movement in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. We denounce the terrorism that struck the Eastern shores of the United States, and all forms of violence, whether it be by a group of individuals or by the state. We also denounce the racist scapgoating of Arabs, Muslims and South Asians in the name of "security." We believe that the war is not the answer, and that the security at home requires peace and justice abroad. For more information, contact NoWarNetwork@yahoo.co.jp or call Miho Kim at 510 251 8800 x314.