

The Norm Formation and Limitation in Arms Export Ban

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The aim of this dissertation is to explain how the Three Principles of Arms Exports, a set of internal rules outlined by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), came to be seen as constitutional principles from 1945 to 1983. Previous research has explained that the principles were formed by norms such as “Pacifism” and “Antimilitarism” from constructivists’ perspectives. This research attempts to use those previous analyses to form an explanation for the historical policy change of the principles. In the 1950’s, Japan exported guns and ammunition to Thailand, Burma, Taiwan, Brazil, South Vietnam, and Indonesia. At that time the government considered expanding the defense industry into an export industry. However, the Ministry of Finance interrupted this policy formation process by demanding a balanced defense budget. Prime Minister Eisaku Satō originally created the principles in 1967 under political pressure from the Diet. Sato proposed the principles that banned the Japanese government from arms trade with (1) Communist bloc countries, (2) countries subject to "arms" exports embargo under the United Nations Security Council's resolutions, and (3) countries involved in or likely to be involved in international conflicts. In 1976, Prime Minister Takeo Miki submitted a statement, which is widely known as the Unified View of the Government to the House of Representatives’ Budget Committee. This statement confirmed the nation’s pledge to “not permit the export of arms to countries or regions barred by the Three Principles” and “to refrain from exporting arms to other areas not included in the Three Principles in conformity with the spirit of the Japanese Constitution and the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Act”. Thus, the principles became an official policy, which banned arms export. The review of these principles took place amid rapid economic and technological development in Japan. In the latter half of the 1970’s, the United States began to issue policies that called on its allies to share military technology. During this time, the Japanese industry had developed major technological advancement in the defense sector. Through negotiation with U.S., the Japanese government attempted to agree on a compromise between the principles and in order to cooperate with its U.S. ally. A Cabinet Meeting in 1983 approved the transfer of arms technology to the U.S., which was dependent upon the Japan-US Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement. The result of this study reveals that the Japanese security policy was formed during policy processes at the domestic and international level by historical descriptions. These findings demonstrate that it is not enough to focus on the relations between norm and policy to explain the principles as previous research had assumed. The characteristics of the principles cannot be recognized as a consequence of compromise among exclusive political interests.