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ON THE BRINK

Constitutional revision threatens return to militarism

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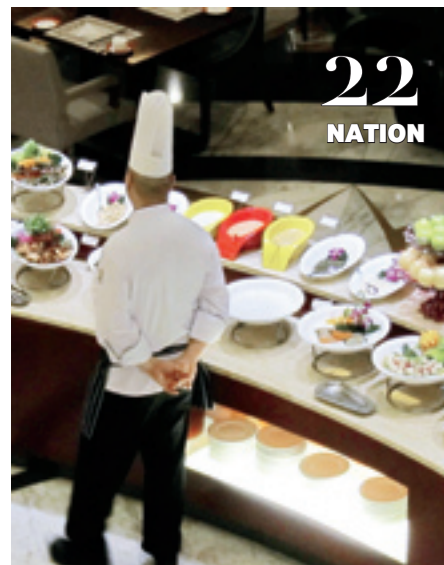
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EDITOR

The Wrong Path

More than six decades after its adoption, the Japanese Constitution is in danger of abandoning its pacifist principles. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe vowed to introduce substantive amendments with the ultimate aim of changing its war-renouncing clause, a long-established provision considered pivotal to Japan's prosperity and regional peace.

When the Constitution was formulated during the Allied occupation following World War II, Japan agreed to relinquish the right to wage wars in order to reassure neighboring countries that suffered from the aggression of Japanese militarists. In addition, it believed that by giving up the need to maintain formal military forces, the war-torn country would be able to focus on economic development.

The Constitution, which has remained unchanged since entering into force in 1947, laid the groundwork for Japan's postwar efforts to reinvigorate its economy and reshape its international image. The country has since risen from the ruins of war to become a leading economy and a major player in the global arena. Recent protests staged by Japanese people against constitutional revisions are evidence of the validity and popularity of the peaceful charter.

Abe's attempt has not only met with opposition at home, but also been denounced worldwide. Countries that fought against Japanese militarism, including China, have all voiced concerns. In their view, the ongoing campaign to change the pacifist nature of the Constitution signals the rise of right-wing political forces and a possible return to militarism in Japan, a trend that may eventually destabilize the region.

In recent weeks, the Japanese prime minister has caused alarm by taking a series of controversial moves. He donated to the Yasukuni Shrine, where war criminals are honored along with Japanese war dead. He also cast doubt on the term "aggression" in an apparent bid to whitewash Japan's wartime history. Moreover, he asserted there is no need to explain to neighboring countries his motivation in rewriting the Japanese Constitution.

Enough is enough. Abe's eagerness to elevate Japan's international status may be understandable, but he has no excuse to disrespect history in an appeal to right-wing sentiments at home. This approach is bound to backfire and disrupt his rational pursuits. Only by doing justice to history and learning its lessons, as Germany has done, can Japan gain the trust of its neighbors and the international community. ■

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CHARM OF A NURSE

A nurse from Chongqing Armed Police Forces Hospital presents nursing etiquette during an activity of the hospital on May 7 to welcome International Nurses Day, which falls on May 12.

Back to Normal

Teachers, students and volunteers attend a flag-raising ceremony in Lushan Middle School in Lushan County, Ya'an City in southwest China's Sichuan Province, on May 6. Classes resumed at 329 schools in the city that day, 16 days after a 7.0-magnitude earthquake jolted the city and surrounding areas.

All 729,341 people who were displaced by the earthquake in Ya'an have been temporarily resettled, local authorities said.

More than 780,000 local residents will be subsidized with 10 yuan (\$1.62) and half a kilogram of grain per person per day for six months, according to a government plan.



Food Safety

China will punish the production and sale of unsafe food products more harshly to combat increasingly severe food scandals, judicial authorities said on May 3.

The Supreme People's Court (SPC) and the Supreme People's Procuratorate have issued judicial interpretations that specify crimes related to food safety and set standards for the punishment of these crimes, SPC spokesman Sun Jungong told a press conference.

Some 2,088 people were

punished between 2010 and 2012 in 1,533 food safety cases. The number of such cases grew exponentially in the three years.

According to the Criminal Law, there are two basic charges of undermining food safety. The first is producing and selling food that fails to meet the safety standards, and the second is producing and selling poisonous and hazardous food. But the charges should meet the important conditions of "enough to cause serious food poisoning and other food-borne diseases."

Free Lunch

More than 30 million students in rural China are benefiting from a nutritional lunch program launched by the government, according to the Ministry of Education.

At a May 3 video conference, Vice Minister of Education Lu Xin said that the program has covered more than one fourth of rural students in compulsory education in the country.

The program was launched in 2011 to improve nutrition conditions of rural students, each of whom gets a free lunch at school each day.

Polluters Punished

China's environmental watchdog punished 15 factories, as well as companies in two industrial parks, in the first quarter of the year for violations resulting in water or air pollution.

The factories either had their production suspended, were given a deadline to correct their practices or were ordered to move their projects to other places and compensate those affected, said a release from the Ministry of Environmental Protection on May 8.

The plants were punished for excessive or illegal discharges of exhaust gas and waste water, as well as noise and dust pollution, the statement said.

Antibiotic Overuse

China's health authorities have demanded further efforts in establishing a long-term mechanism against overuse of antibiotics.

The National Health and Family Planning Commission on May 7 introduced this year's plan for promoting the reasonable use of antibiotics and containing the rise of bacterial resistance, as part of a national initiative launched in 2011.

Use of antibiotics by patients not in



DUCK AT HARBOR

The world's largest rubber duck, created by Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman, arrives in Hong Kong on May 2. The 15-meter inflatable rubber sculpture has visited 12 cities in 10 countries since 2007



CYCLE WORLD

A visitor examines new bicycles at the 23rd China International Bicycle and Motor Fair, which kicked off in Shanghai on May 6



AP/WIDEWORLD

accordance with doctors' prescriptions is still a phenomenon in China, which not only results in an unnecessary economic burden but also harms people's health by causing bacterial resistance to antibiotics, the commission said.

Foreign Entry Rules

The Chinese Government on May 3 released draft regulations relating to foreigners' entry and residence in China and what is regarded as illegal entry, stay or work in the country.

According to the regulations, foreigners must obtain work permits and residence certificates for employment before being employed. Employment beyond the scope or

time limit of a student's work-study program shall be considered illegal.

It shall also be considered illegal if foreigners remain in the country beyond their visa-free stay period or leave areas they have been allowed to stay in.

Since January 1, travelers from 45 countries have been benefiting from 72-hour visa-free stays in Beijing and Shanghai, a move that is expected to boost consumption. Foreign visitors are not permitted to leave the cities to travel to other Chinese cities during the 72 hours, and have to depart from the two cities.

Foreigners who violate China's laws and regulations and are deemed "unsuitable" to stay will be

given an exit deadline of no more than 30 days, according to the draft. Foreigners who use forged or altered official certificates to enter or exit the country will be given a warning and could be fined up to 2,000 yuan (\$325), the regulations say.

The 61-article draft was released by the Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council, China's cabinet at www.chinalaw.gov.cn to solicit public opinions until June 3.

Cultural Site Protection

China is making more efforts to preserve its cultural relics, formally prioritizing the protection of more historic sites.

In early May, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage added 1,943 sites of unmovable cultural relics to the list of key areas that need protection, taking the total number of sites on this list to 4,295.

Reviewed by more than 130 experts, the newly added sites, located in Shanxi, Henan, Hunan, Hebei and Jiangsu provinces, contain 795 pieces of ancient architecture and 516 ancient ruins as well as stone inscriptions and outstanding modern architecture. Many of the new sites also include valuable cultural relics from ethnic minority regions such as

north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

According to statistics from the latest national archaeological survey conducted from 2007 to 2011, China has more than 760,000 registered unmovable cultural relics and 2,384 state-owned museums hold 28.6 million collected relics.

The survey also showed that in the past 30 years, more than 40,000 unmovable Chinese relics have vanished, with half of them destroyed by construction work.

Nurse Population

China's number of certified nurses reached 2.49 million at the end of 2012 amid the country's continuous efforts to build up its nursing population, a senior medical official said on May 8.

That meant an increase of 1.15 million from 2005, according to the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

China aims to bring its nursing population to 2.86 million by 2015, meaning there will be 2.07 nurses for every 1,000 people, according to a blueprint on nursing issued in January 2012.

However, even if that target is met, the ratio of certified nurses per 1,000 people in China would still be much lower than the United States and countries in the European Union.

Out to Sea

Thirty Chinese fishing vessels set off for the Nansha Islands in the South China Sea on May 6.

The ships, each with a capacity exceeding 100 tons, will remain around the Nansha Islands for 40 days. A supply ship and a transport vessel will be accompanying the fleet.

The ultimate goal of the operation is to develop a business model that allows fishermen to catch fish around the Nansha Islands on a regular basis, said local fishery authorities.



LI FENG

Lucrative Vegetable

Yin Zuohai, a villager from Fushun County, north China's Hebei Province, holds a self-grown tomato.

Fushun County invested heavily in guiding local villagers to grow green and organic vegetables. To date, the county grows 1.22 million tons of organic vegetables each year.



Non-Manufacturing Sector Shrinks

The purchasing managers index (PMI) for the non-manufacturing sector stood at 54.5 percent in April, down 1.1 percentage points from the previous month, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing (CFLP) said on May 3.

The non-manufacturing PMI dropped in April from March, but still came in above the demarcation line, indicating stable growth for non-manufacturing economic activity, said Cai Jin, Vice Chairman of CFLP.

The sub-index for service business

activity stood at 52.5 percent in April, down 1.4 percentage points from the previous month. Within the same category, the index for construction shrank 0.1 percentage points from the previous month to 62.4 percent.

The sub-index for new orders lost 1.1 percentage points from a month earlier to 50.9 percent. In that category, the index for new orders in the service sector fell 1.6 percentage points to 49.8 percent.

The sub-index for intermediate input prices lost 4.2 percentage points to reach 51.1 percent in April. This indicates that non-manufacturing enterprises are optimistic about their business in the next three

months, said the NBS.

The sub-index for prices stood at 47.6 percent in April, down 2.4 percentage points from the previous month. In the category, the index for the service sector declined 3.2 percentage points to 46.7 percent.

But the sub-index for business outlook climbed 0.1 percentage point month on month to 62.5 percent.

The non-manufacturing PMI is based on a survey of about 1,200 companies in 27 industries, including transportation, real estate, catering and software development.

Foreign Trade Rebound

China's foreign trade volume grew by 15.7 percent year on year in April, faster than the 12.1 percent increase in March, according to customs data

released on May 8.

The General Administration of Customs, said in a statement that total exports and imports stood at \$356 billion in April. Exports rose 14.7 percent year on year to \$187 billion, while imports surged 16.8 percent to \$169 billion, the data showed.

China saw a trade surplus of \$18.16 billion in April, narrowing 1.7 percent from a year earlier. In the first four months of the year, total foreign trade expanded 14 percent from a year ago to \$1.33 trillion, while trade surplus stood at \$61 billion.

Video Website Acquisition

China's online search leader Baidu Inc. announced on May 7 it will pay \$370 million to buy the online video business PPS, in its latest attempt to grab market share in the highly competitive industry.

Baidu will integrate the PPS online video business into its own video platform iQiyi. It expects the combined entity to become China's largest online video platform by number of mobile users and video viewing time. The deal is expected to close in the second quarter of this year. The acquisition is Baidu's latest step to diversify businesses beyond



TURNING SUNSHINE INTO NUTRITION

A greenhouse installed with LED ecological glass is on show in Beijing on May 9. Developed by Beijing-based Aobo Group, this type of glass can turn the sun's UV light into light that is most conducive to plant growth



COLORFUL FLUID

Visitors observe cocktails at the 15th HOFEX, the largest food and hospitality trade show in the Asia-Pacific, in Hong Kong on May 7

its core search sector.

China's online video industry has struggled for profits due to the high cost of content. Eyeing long-term advertising revenues in the booming mobile Internet sector, major market players have stepped up efforts to develop their mobile user base despite current difficulties.

The latest deal would make iQiyi a more competent contender to industry leader Youku Tudou Inc., which was created last year through the merger of the country's two major video giants Youku and Tudou.

Energy Collaboration

China's largest offshore oil producer announced on May 6 that it has inked an agreement to buy liquefied natural gas (LNG) from BG Group and increased its stakes in an LNG project in Australia.

Under the contract, the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) will purchase 5 million tons per annum (mtpa) of LNG, starting in 2015, from BG Group's global LNG portfolio for 20 years.

By then, the CNOOC's mid-and-long-term LNG contracted volumes will reach 21.6 mtpa, the company



CHEN XIAOMEI

said in a statement on its website.

CNOOC will also acquire a 40-percent equity interest in QCLNG Train 1, increasing its equity ownership from 10 percent to 50 percent. It will acquire a 20-percent equity interest in the reserves and resources of certain BG Group tenements in the Walloons Fairway region of the Surat Basin, Queensland, increasing its equity ownership from 5 percent to 25 percent. It will acquire a 25-percent equity interest in certain other upstream tenements held by BG Group in the same region.

CNOOC and BG Group will also jointly invest in building two more LNG transportation ships in China. Those transactions will be completed by the end of this year.

Inflation Rises

China's consumer price index (CPI), a main gauge of inflation, grew

2.4 percent year on year in April, up from 2.1 percent in March, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said on May 9.

The bureau attributed the increase mainly to an unusual increase in vegetable prices during that month as low temperatures and scarce rainfalls disrupted supplies.

In April, food prices, which account for nearly one third of weighting in China's CPI, increased 4 percent year on year, with the prices of vegetables rising 5.9 percent, said the NBS.

On a monthly basis, consumer prices in April edged up 0.2 percent.

The NBS also said that China's producer price index (PPI), which measures wholesale inflation, fell 2.6 percent year on year in April, marking the 14th straight month of decline and the steepest drop in six months, pointing to continued weak market demand.

Numbers

80 tln yuan

China's personal investable assets in 2012, representing an annualized growth rate of 14 percent compared to the amount recorded in 2010

2.84 tln yuan

Total liabilities of the China Railway Corporation by the end of March, with a debt-to-income ratio of 62.31 percent

988

Number of new companies that have been registered in Macao in the first quarter of this year, up 12.1 percent year on year

\$330 mln

Value of exports of China's herb extracts during the first quarter, a year-on-year increase of 11.2 percent

Taxi Fare Hike

A taxi driver waits for passengers outside the Beijing Railway Station on May 7.

Taxi fares will rise in Beijing in an effort to address drivers' complaints over low salaries amid a soaring cost of living in the capital.



NBAI

THIS WEEK WORLD



THE UNITED STATES

A fire service helicopter douses a massive wildfire on May 3 near Camarillo, California



AP/WIDEWORLD



XINHUA/GETTY IMAGES



SOUTH KOREA

Performers wearing traditional garb march at the re-opening ceremony of Namdaemun, or the South Gate, in Seoul on May 4. The landmark architecture, first built in 1395, was burned down in an arson attack five years ago



MADAGASCAR

A local resident watches a swarm of locusts fly above a field in a village 600 km southwest of Antananarivo on May 4. A locust plague recently hit Madagascar, jeopardizing the country's agriculture

HE XIANFENG





TURKEY

A soldier demonstrates a battlefield simulation system developed by a Turkish company at the 11th International Defense Industry Fair in Istanbul on May 7



JAPAN

Children play beneath colorful carp-shaped flags in a riverside park on May 2 in Sagami-hara, Kanagawa Prefecture, to celebrate Japan's Children's Day



IRAN

Former top Iranian nuclear negotiator Hassan Rouhani waves while registering his candidacy for the upcoming presidential election in June at the Ministry of Interior in Tehran on May 7

“Food safety crimes seriously harm people’s health, and severely disturb the order of the market economy. We’ll resolutely fight against those crimes and impose harsher punishments.”

Sun Jungong, a spokesman for the Supreme People’s Court, at a news conference in Beijing on May 3



“It makes no sense to erect a statue to celebrate students’ exam results.”

Yang Yuan, a 19-year-old Tsinghua University freshman, in response to a statue of himself erected by Laifeng County High School in central China’s Hubei Province where he studied before going to college. Yang scored the highest in the 2012 national college entrance examination in Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture last year



“I can’t imagine what I will be like in 10 years, when I still won’t be able to afford a house or even a car.”

Chen Yu, a 31-year-old program editor at a TV station, on May 3. Soaring prices and a complicated household registration system are preventing many young Chinese from obtaining their first home



“Many doctors and nurses sometimes ignore risks from their work and have never been trained or educated in how to protect themselves.”

Li Huijuan, a lawyer specializing in doctor-patient cases, in response to a tragedy in which a doctor trying to escape assault by a patient’s family fatally fell from the third floor of the hospital building in Guantao County, Hebei Province, on May 5



BANK HEAD RESIGNS



Ma Weihua, President of China Merchants Bank (CMB), resigned from the post of the bank’s Party chief, CMB announced on May 8. Ma’s term as CMB president will end in June.

Ma started his job as CMB president 14 years ago, when the bank, with only 100 billion yuan (\$16.13 billion) in assets, was reeling from the Asian financial crisis. He won recognition by managing reforms that optimized the bank’s structure and boosted efficiency. His innovative moves have turned CMB from a regional bank in Shenzhen, south China’s Guangdong Province, into the sixth largest lender by market value in China.



POISONING VICTIM



Zhu Ling, a former student of Tsinghua University in Beijing, has drawn renewed public attention recently. She fell ill in Tsinghua in December 1994. Later, doctors found that she had been poisoned with thallium.

She suffered permanent neurological damage because of the poisoning. Now 40, She remains paralyzed and nearly blind with diminished mental capacity. She is being cared for by her parents, who are in their 70s.

Her roommate in Tsinghua was investigated and subsequently cleared as a suspect in the case.

Zhu’s case drew attention from the public again in April, when a graduate student at Fudan University in Shanghai died after prolonged exposure to N-Nitrosodimethylamine in a case in which his roommate was considered a suspect. The public is calling for a reinvestigation of Zhu’s case and a clear response from the police.



The Stagflation Era of the Real Estate Market

South Reviews
May 7

In the past 10 years, the Chinese real estate market has boomed, benefiting local governments and real estate developers alike. Income from land sales has become the largest part of local authority revenue. Such earnings have risen from 540 billion yuan (\$87.7 billion) 10 years ago to 2.85 trillion yuan (\$460 billion), taking up a half of local fiscal revenues.

However, the 10-year boom has resulted in high housing prices. Although various policies have been implemented to control housing costs, most were ineffective.

For the new term of government, controlling real estate prices is undoubtedly one of the most pressing issues. If it continues its old model of cost control, the deformed development of the real estate market will become increasingly serious.

To solve the problem, on the one hand, the Central Government should curb real estate speculation; on the other, it should reduce local government reliance on land sales. More specifically, it should increase the supply of land and affordable housing while restraining investment in houses.

Poisonous Ginger *Shanxi Evening News* May 7

It was recently reported that farmers in Weifang, east China's Shandong Province, were found to have cultivated ginger using toxic pesticide. Experts say the use of toxic pesticide during planting not only poisons produce, but also pollutes the local environment.

Local ginger farmers are aware of the harmful effects of pesticide, but they are more interested in economic profits. The incident has revealed that effective legal supervision is lacking.

It is noticeable that all toxic ginger are only for the domestic market, while the output for export is not affected as stricter quarantine and inspection are implemented before export. The double standards in food safety between internal and overseas markets have long been publicly questioned.

Local watchdogs should also be held responsible for the problem. The Central Government gave local authorities more power in food supervision in 2008 and established National Food and Drug Administration in 2010, aimed to enhance supervision in food production. However, such measures have produced little effect. In particular, it is reported that Weifang does have an established food supervision system, but it has not operated properly.

In general, if institutional defects in law enforcement cannot be addressed, China could not prevent further crises. Some money-centered food producers may take advantage of the weak law enforcement and recklessly use toxic pesticides or additives in their products.

Palace Museum Security *Xinhua Daily Telegraph* May 7

The Palace Museum in Beijing has again made news due to security concerns. On May 4, a 22-year old tourist from central China's Hubei Province smashed a window with his fist and broke an antique gilded clock from the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The vulnerable security system at the museum has since become the target of much public ridicule.

Following a burglary on May 8, 2011, the Palace Museum improved its security network, but to little avail. Moreover, its real-time monitor

failed to capture the tourist on film.

Speaking to the press, the Palace Museum said it would install more cameras to ensure there are no blind spots. But the public has heard this all before.

The museum faces massive challenges in relic preservation and dealing with swarming tourists and has continuously set new limits on its maximum capacity in recent years.

Apart from security loopholes, the incident revealed the improper behavior of some visitors. Both the museum and visitors should make efforts to better preserve the collection in the museum.

Sense of Safety

New Weekly
May 1

Do you feel safe? Is the city you live in safe?

Recently, the outbreak of H7N9 bird flu, the poisoning case at Fudan University in Shanghai, the Boston Marathon terrorist bombing and the Ya'an earthquake have made people feel increasingly unsafe.

However, the greatest contributor to making people feel unsafe often comes from the hidden dangers of daily life. Polluted air and water, unsafe food, fragile marriages, and heavy employment pressure have all increased people's anxiety.

While some manage to deal with the challenges posed by every day life, individual power is limited. In order to improve common security, society as a whole needs to change its attitude. Individual safety, dignity, personality and happiness should be set above interests. If GDP growth comes at the expense of people's safety, happiness would only be temporary.



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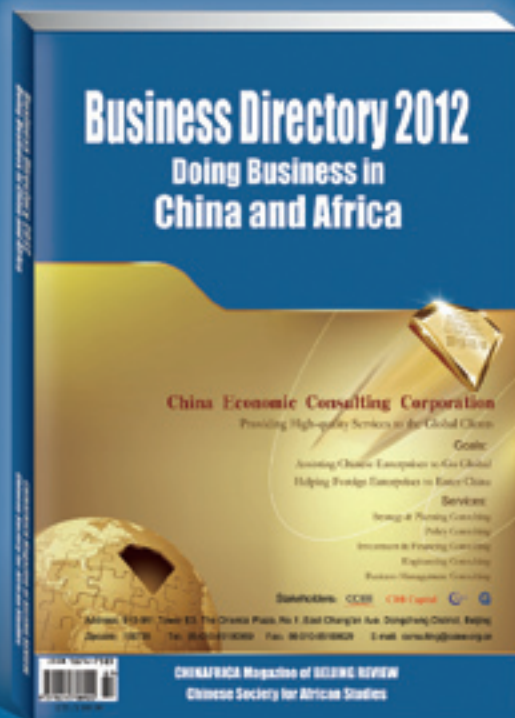
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COVER STORY

ABNORMAL NORMALIZATION

Japan's prime minister seeks to dismantle pacifist Constitution

By Yu Lintao

Anation's constitution represents its highest ideals and laws, and any attempt to change such a crucial foundation must be approached with utmost respect and foresight.

However, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe recently reaffirmed his pledge to revise his country's supreme law in such a brash manner that it drew fierce criticism from neighboring countries as well as media worldwide.

Seen from the context of the current Japanese pacifist Constitution's origins and the attitude of the Japanese Government toward that period of history, critics say that outsiders may easily understand why Abe's vows have provoked such a strong backlash.

Abe's pursuit of constitutional revision aims to erase Japan's aggressive history during World War II. Critics say, however, that to close that dark chapter of its history, the Japanese Government should face up to it through honest introspection rather than whitewash its past deeds.

Great-power dream

Abe, like other ambitious state leaders, has a dream of great power for Japan—especially at a time when the economic power's global status is continually declining. During his Washington trip in February, Abe claimed that "Japan is not, and will never be, a tier-two country" in a speech titled *Japan Is Back*.

Since returning to power last December, Abe has taken bold steps toward economic reform, including deregulation and joining Trans-Pacific Partnership free-trade negotiations. The

so-called "Abenomics" plan has gained the prime minister high popularity in Japan. A Kyodo poll at the beginning of May showed Abe's approval rating is 71.1 percent, which Geng Xin, Deputy Director of the JCC New Japan Research Institute, said is mostly owing to Abe's economic policies.

His high domestic popularity, however, has been accompanied by strong criticism by overseas media and howls of protest from neighboring countries.

The Abe administration has taken the opportunity to undergo the beginning of a rightward shift, beautifying past Japanese war crimes and raising once again the issue of rewriting its pacifist Constitution.

Asked in parliament about his government's position on an official apology made by former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama for Japan's colonial rule and aggression in Asia during World War II, Abe replied, "The definition of what constitutes aggression has yet to be established in academia or in the international community. Things that happened between nations will look differently depending on which side you view them from."

Abe's move has enraged not only China and South Korea, two of the biggest victims of Japan's war crimes, but also some major Western media outlets.

An editorial in *The Washington Post* reads, "Yes, history is always being reinterpreted. But there are such things as facts. Japan occupied Korea. It occupied Manchuria and then the rest of China. It invaded Malaya. It committed aggression. Why, decades after Germany solidified

its place in Europe by facing history honestly, are facts so difficult for some in Japan to acknowledge?"

Meanwhile, a comment of *The Wall Street Journal* said that Abe's "foray into historical relativism will come as news to survivors of Pearl Harbor, the Bataan Death March or the Rape of Nanjing." "Much of the world long ago forgave Japan its wartime atrocities. But it hasn't forgotten them."

On April 28, the first "Restoration of Sovereignty Day" advocated by the Abe administration in commemoration of the day in 1952 when the San Francisco Peace Treaty took effect and formally ended the U.S. occupation of Japan, Abe called for a renewal of a sense of hope and determination, "to make Japan a strong and resolute country," a clear sign of Abe's intention to revise the Japanese Constitution.

When meeting with reporters on May 1 during his overseas trip, Abe vowed to win two thirds of the seats in the upper house required for constitutional revision in the July election.

The revision, which would once again give the nation the right to self-defense, is seen by many experts as a pretext for strengthening the Japanese military.

"Japan is an economic power, but Japanese politicians have always pursued a military-political power status, expanding its political sway through the normalization of its military power, which calls for breaking the tether of the current pacifist Constitution," said Shi Yongming, an associate research fellow with the China Institute of International Studies.





PEEVED PACIFISTS: People rally outside the Japanese Embassy in Seoul on April 25, decrying Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's remarks denying the country's aggressive history and Japanese lawmakers' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine

The Japanese pacifist Constitution, which has served as a solid foundation for the rapid development of Japan in the postwar era, is denounced by Japan's right wing as a national shame because it was drafted by the "occupying forces."

Wu Huaizhong, a researcher with the Institute of Japanese Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that although revising a Constitution and possessing an army are normal for a sovereign country, the prospect of military normalization and constitutional revision under the guidance of right-leaning thought would certainly arouse concern.

However, Abe appears to have ignored the concern of neighboring countries. He said to reporters on May 1 that there is no need for Japan to explain its decision to revise its Constitution to its neighbors.

Abe isn't alone in his appeal to revisionism. On April 23, 168 Japanese lawmakers paid tribute to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, which still houses the memorial tablets of major war criminals of World War II—the largest collective visit made by Japanese politicians in years. Days before, three members of the Abe cabinet visited the shrine respectively while Abe sent a ritual offering. In China and South Korea, visits to the Tokyo shrine are seen as symbolic of Japan's refusal to atone for its crimes against its neighbors.

Uncertain consequences

Abe's right-leaning tendency on the one hand is intended to satisfy domestic political needs, and on the other hand concerns the acquiescence and even encouragement of Washington.

"Tokyo is taking advantage of Washington's 'pivot to Asia' strategy," Shi said to *Beijing Review*. In this context, the United States is inclined to rearm Japan to balance the rise of China, Shi added.

Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and former Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye, Jr., in a report last August sponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C., sought tier-one status for Japan. They argued that Japan and the United States should face the rise of China together while advocating a larger role for Japan's Self-Defense Forces.

Wu Zurong, a research fellow with the China Foundation for International Studies, a think tank based in Beijing, noted that Japan is often used to serve Washington's dual tactics toward China, with the aim of simultaneously cooperating with and containing the latter.

He added that rearming Japan conforms to the U.S. global military strategy as the United States is mired in a severe budget deficit and shortage of military expenditure.

From the long-term view, however, the rearming of Japan is probably not in line with the interests of the United States in view of Japan's false reading of history, Shi said.

"It is ill-advised for the U.S. Government to regard China as a strategic opponent at a time when more and more Americans are seeking to develop partnerships with China," Shi said.

Observers worry the direction Japan is taking could possibly bring instability to the region and sow discord for mutual political trust.

Shi told *Beijing Review* that the shock of Tokyo's push to regional stability is self-evident. "To attain its goal of military normalization, it is not unthinkable that the Abe administration could stir up trouble in the East China Sea and South China Sea maritime disputes or the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue to attack opposition voices," said Shi.

East Asian economies are increasingly interdependent. The impact of Tokyo's move on mutual trust would negatively affect regional economic cooperation.

The economic integration of East Asia is an inevitable trend, but the irresponsible attitude taken by Abe toward Japan's past as well as his attempt to rewrite the Japanese Constitution would undermine the basis for integration and postpone the process, eventually damaging the national interests of East Asian countries including Japan, said Huo Jiangang, an expert on Japanese studies with the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations.

Many Japanese citizens are not willing to give up their pacifist Constitution. On May 3, a group of about 3,500 Japanese people gathered in Hibiya Park in downtown Tokyo and took to the streets to demonstrate their opposition to the government's attempt to amend the war-renouncing Article 9 of Japan's Constitution.

Asahi Shimbun, a leading newspaper in Japan, also warned the Abe administration in its editorial that Japan's isolation from China and South Korea may affect its own interests amid the unpredictable Korean Peninsula situation.

However, observers are not optimistic that Abe will abandon rewriting the Constitution. "If the right wing wins the upcoming upper house election, Abe's next move is imperative," Shi said.

China and South Korea are firmly voicing their concern about the issue. Reports said that South Korea's parliament set up a special committee in May to respond to Japan's moves. At a recent press conference, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson advised Japan to take a prudent attitude, deeply repent for its history and take concrete actions to win the trust of its Asian neighbors and the international community.

Huo said the Japanese right wing's push for the so-called "normal statehood" could have an abnormal effect on the country in light of its wrong view of history. ■



High-Level China-Africa Investment Forum

One of the three high-level forums to be held during the Second China (Beijing) International Fair for Trade in Services from May 28-June 1, 2013

Date: May 30, 2013
Venue: China National Convention Center
Hosts: China Society for World Trade Organization Studies
Beijing Review

A business forum focusing on the themes:

- Prospects and Risks for Chinese Businesses Investing in Africa
- China's Policies and Environment for African Enterprises Doing Business in China

Objectives:

- » To further partnerships at both business and government levels in the area of trade in services;
- » To promote mutual investment opportunities;
- » To provide insight into challenges facing Chinese and African businesses making overseas investments; and
- » To establish a platform for interaction between Chinese and African business people, discussing bilateral investment trends in trade in services and offering suggestions for improving investment environments

