

Abstract

This thesis is studies Japan's reasons for sending the Japanese Self-Defense Force (JSDF) to participate in the reconstruction in Iraq during 2003-2006. This was at a time when foreign forces were under continual attack with many foreign troops dying, especially those from the United States. Japan's action contradicted the condition relating to the UN Peacekeeping Cooperation Law. This Study has used the National Interest concept as the analytical frame work to analyzed cooperation of Japan in the reconstruction program. It was expected that Japan would gain benefits in terms of economic trade and national security.

This study found that the participation of the JSDF in the Reconstruction Operation in the Samawah district of Muthanna province was successful, earning the gratitude of the Iraqis and the United Nations. However, this does not necessarily mean that the JSDF will be participating in every future U.N. operation. An analysis of the reasons for sending the JSDF into the Reconstruction Operation in Iraq showed that it was in Japan's national interests to participate for the following reasons: (1) Because Japan relies so heavily on the United States for its national security and help in resolving conflicts with neighboring countries, it has come to realize full well that continued American military support is vital; (2) Japan is a major importer of Middle Eastern oil. Thus, working to stabilize this part of the world is good for Japan's energy portfolio; (3) And lastly, Japan seeks to avoid international criticism of practicing "checkbook diplomacy", the kind of which it received for its lack of direct participation in the First Gulf War.