

A New Shogunate? Democratic Reductionism and Elite Capture in Contemporary Japan

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Abstract— This article analyzes Japan’s new grand strategy under the administration of Sanae Takaichi, questioning electoral reductionism through the concept of “Elite state capture”. Through a prosopographic analysis of the main ministerial portfolios since 2001, it examines how access to public power is conditioned by family lineages (*Shūshi*), university clans (*Gakubatsu*) and the corporate support of the nation’s most important business conglomerate (*Keiretsu*). The results reveal an educational oligopoly concentrated in the “Golden Triangle” (University of Tokyo, Keiō and Waseda) and a bifurcation in postgraduate studies that balances transnational legitimation with the endogenous indoctrination of the Matsushita Institute. Finally, it is demonstrated how this endogamous structure instrumentalizes the global rare earth supply crisis vis-à-vis China and maritime securitization within the framework of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) to justify the expansion of defense spending. It is concluded that the country operates a systematic transition from post-war constitutional pacifism to dynastic militarist realism, whose final objective is the reform of Article 9 of the Constitution.

Keywords— Elite Capture, Democracy, Japan, China, Gakubatsu, Keiretsu, Critical Minerals, Populism, Rare Earths, QUAD, and Militaristic Realism.

Introduction

Contemporary analysis of democratic erosion and silent autocratization calls for the dismantling of purely institutionalist approaches that ignore the material bases of political power. In the context of East Asia, and specifically in the case of Japan, the transition to a verticalized and ideologically homogeneous model of governance is not explained by an open constitutional rupture, but through the capture and reconfiguration of traditional channels of governmental influence. This study addresses this phenomenon from the mutation of the historical relationship between the State, the private sector and academia, analyzing how the centralization of the executive has made it possible to structure a contemporary version of the Iron Triangle that instrumentalizes the crisis of global strategic resources to consolidate a nationalist and remilitarization project.

Therefore, this article seeks to understand the dynamics of silent autocratization and technonationalism in Japan from the administration of former Prime Minister Jun’ichirō Koizumi to the current ministerial cabinet of Sanae Takaichi. In this sense,

it is determined how the centralization of executive power configures an Iron Triangle, sustained by the co-optation of the political environment, university networks in the form of *Gakubatsus*, and the business community under the umbrella of the *Keiretsu*, which channels financial resources and political legitimation, in addition to the risk that this represents for the security of East Asia. Given the above purpose, three fundamental axes are established to dissect the current Japanese governance model. First, an analysis is made of the structural transformations of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the evolution of its alliances in the Japanese Diet and how the neutralization of traditional factions facilitates the concentration of power in the Prime Minister.

Subsequently, it aims to characterize the mechanisms of screening and ideological conditioning in Japanese elite universities through the networks of the *Gakubatsu*, analyzing their intersection with the regulatory frameworks, academic restrictions and human capital retention policies of STEM institutions in China that limit the subsequent labor link of foreign graduates with the technological and industrial ecosystem of Japan. Followed by the attempt to determine the degree of causality between the securitization of the supply chain of minerals critical to the financing of Japanese rearmament under an environment in which a policy of economic security, the sustained increase in defense spending and the rise of increasingly nationalist governments converge, besieging the achievement of the constitutional reform of Article 9.

Theoretical framework

The contemporary study of transformations in political regimes requires overcoming institutionalist visions that reduce democratic validity to the mere existence of periodic elections or to the apparent maintenance of the separation of powers. But in order to go beyond this limited vision, it is necessary to turn to literature on processes of endogenous democratic erosion (Bormeio, 2016), who conceptualizes *executive aggrandizement* as a process by which a legitimately elected president gradually and legally dismantles institutions, starting with the parliamentary system and the legal counterweight. In such

a way, the power of the judicial and legislative branches is directly concentrated in the executive branch.

That is, far from the classic institutional ruptures understood as military coups or seizure of power by force, this dynamic is also complemented by the thesis of Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt on democratic degradation as a phenomenon endogenous to the system itself at the hands of institutional actors who instrumentalize special attributions of their office (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018). This translates, in the Japanese case, into the concentration of powers disguised as technical and regulatory rigour.

It is then that it is key to introduce the concept of *stealth authoritarianism* developed by Ozan Varol, who argues that contemporary autocratic regimes make distorted use of the mechanisms of constitutional law, understood as ordinary laws and procedural reforms, in order to protect the concentration of power in a legal way while shielding the elites from dissent (Varol, 2015).

This centralization of power is directly reflected in the Prime Minister's Office (*Kantei*), which, far from openly violating the Constitution, consolidated its dominance through the promotion of apparently neutral laws whose ultimate purpose ended up being the inability to oversee legislation and neutralize the opposition. A clear example of this was the 2014 reform of the National Public Service Law, which allowed for the creation of the Cabinet Personnel Office (*Naikaku Jinjikyoku*). Under a technocratic rhetoric of efficiency and administrative modernization, this law legally transferred control of appointments to more than 600 high-level bureaucratic posts directly to the Prime Minister, dismantling the traditional meritocratic system that guaranteed the independence of ministries. This is how the Executive acquired the ability to de facto purge the dissident technical cadres; in such a way that he aligned the public administration with the ruling faction without breaking the formal constitutional framework.

Regarding the capture of the academic and administrative sectors, the sociology of bureaucracy by B. Guy Peters (2008) and Oscar Oszlak (2006) states that civilian structures are not technically independent, but a dynamic reflection of the dominant political coalitions that control promotion incentives. A dynamic that is perfectly evident in how the student networks of Japan's elite universities (*Gakubatsu*) operate, and that, taking Peter Haas' thesis (1992) as a reference, function as coopted epistemic communities where ideological screening and conditioning purify dissent. The relevance of this framework lies in how it explains Japan's reaction to the legal restrictions on the retention of STEM talent in China (such as its 2017 Intelligence Law), forcing the *Kantei* to ideologically

shield its own study centers to ensure control of knowledge and avoid reverse technology transfers.

Finally, the material and financial support of this centralization is analyzed from the theory of *weaponized interdependence*, by Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman, which demonstrates how states instrumentalize physical and informational bottlenecks in global production networks. This is based on Japan's vulnerability to China's monopoly on lanthanide refinement, and exacerbated by the Senkaku Islands crisis in 2010. To mitigate this risk, Peter Evan's *theory of embedded autonomy* explains how the Japanese government modernises the Iron Triangle by subordinating the resources of conglomerates (*Keiretsu*) through the Economic Security Act of 2022 to finance increased defence spending. This economic-military nexus, externally legitimized by the Quad allies to ensure alternative flows of critical minerals, dilutes the international cost and makes possible the definitive siege for a possible constitutional reform of Article 9.

Lineages and Corporations: The Dynastic Structure of the LDP and the Financial Support of the *Keidanren*

Understanding the process of silent autocratization in Japan requires, as a matter of priority, the examination of the historical trajectory of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the evolution of the institutional mechanisms that have transformed its power dynamics. Founded in 1955 through the fusion of the country's two main conservative forces to counter the consolidation of the socialist bloc, a period also known as the "1955 System" or "The Party-and-a-Half System", the LDP structured a dominant party regime. Originally, however, the organization did not operate as a monolithic structure, but as a loose federation of highly competitive internal factions (*habatsu*) that negotiated the head of government and distributed ministerial portfolios.

This pluralist balance suffered its most serious institutional crisis between 1993 and 1994, a period of intense instability where Japan had three prime ministers in less than a year. Morihiro Hosokawa (August 1993-April 1994) and Tsutomu Hata (April 1994-June 1994), both former LDP militants, defected from the organization to form opposition parties and temporarily displace the ruling party. This led to the appointment of Tomiichi Murayama (June 1994 to January 1996), leader of the conservative wing of the Socialist Party who, in a pragmatic turn, formed an ephemeral coalition with the PLD itself. The alliance collapsed, causing Murayama to resign in January 1996 and allowing the LDP to return to power under the presidency of Ryūtarō Hashimoto.

To prevent further power leaks, Morihiro Hosakawa and LDP political strategist Ichiro Ozawa pushed for the 1994 electoral reform, which replaced “multi-member districts” with a parallel system of *single-member districts* and proportional representation. By transferring the power of financing and the legal nomination of candidates from the leaders of the factions to the General Secretariat of the party, the institutional design vertically centralized political power. So this reform, veiled in false promises of greater efficiency in the decision-making process and an end to the constant corruption scandals of the PLD, resulted in the centralization of the internal structure in such a way that whoever wins the election of the Party, automatically assumes the leadership of the government, eliminating the old counterweights of the parliamentary regime. at the same time that he indissolubly merged the Presidency of the PLD and the Office of the *Kantei*.

Added to this are the legal particularities of the position. First, the duration in office does not have a legal limit, which allows the indefinite reelection of the president. However, the position is strictly linked to party elections; if the prime minister loses the internal leadership in the LDP elections, he must immediately resign as head of government. This condition explains why the historical average term of government heads in Japan is unstable and short, as evidenced in 1994, frequently interrupted by political scandals, internal divisions or dramatic drops in approval ratings. Despite this, Shinzō Abe broke this pattern of fragility, becoming the longest-serving prime minister in the country’s history by ruling for almost nine years in two non-consecutive terms.

This centralized line of continuity has shaped a dynasty of techno-nationalist control, perfected by Jun’ichirō Koizumi and Shinzō Abe, and which finds its contemporary version in the cabinet of Sanae Takaichi. The political mainspring that sustains this concentration of power is the obtaining of public approval ratings systematically above 60% at critical junctures of reform. These peaks in popularity, capitalized on by Koizumi through *anti-establishment* rhetoric in the 2005 postal privatization, by Abe through historical revisionism and his *Abenomics*, and by Takaichi through the mobilization of technological sovereignty in the face of the crisis of strategic resources, operate as a kind of “bulletproof vest”. This massive political capital disarms the resistance of the moderate sectors of the party and neutralizes social scrutiny, protecting the political and business elites from the ordinary political cost.

In short, the maintenance of this executive hegemony rests on a sophisticated structure of capture over the national media apparatus. The LDP exerts a historical influence over the public broadcasting network NHK (*Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai*), consolidated by the Prime Minister’s prerogative to appoint the members of his Board of Governors. This editorial subordination

was institutionally exacerbated through the instrumentalization of Article 4 of the Broadcast Act, which requires political neutrality from broadcasters. During her previous ministerial administration, Sanae Takaichi formally warned the Diet about the possibility of suspending the broadcasting licenses of those channels that showed a critical bias towards the Executive.

This regulatory pressure is complemented by the close historical ties that link the party with the large conservative mass circulation dailies, specifically the *Yomiuri Shimbun* and the *Sankei Shimbun*. Through this media pincer strategy, the *Kantei* has the ability to freely dispose of the public agenda, isolating dissent and marginalizing parliamentary criticism under the narrative that they constitute “mere political noise promoted by a radical opposition” (Takaichi, 2025).

In the legislative sphere, the PLD machinery is deployed through the absolute control of the National Diet, the bicameral parliamentary body composed of the House of Representatives (465 seats) and the House of Councillors (248 seats). Historically, the party’s governance depended on a strategic alliance with the centrist Buddhist-based Komeito party, which functioned as a moderating brake due to its pacifist position. However, growing tensions over economic securitization meant that, in October 2025, the coalition with Komeito fractured definitively under Takaichi’s leadership. The LDP pragmatically absorbed this rupture through an arithmetic readjustment in the Diet, forging an expeditious alliance with the nationalist right-wing *Nippon Ishin no Kai* (Japan Innovation Party).

This substitution eliminated the internal pacifist veto and paved the way for the early elections of February 2026. During those elections, the LDP and its new allies capitalized on the majority rules of the single-member district system to consolidate a two-thirds supermajority in the lower house (316 seats) and a dominant position with 101 seats in the upper house.

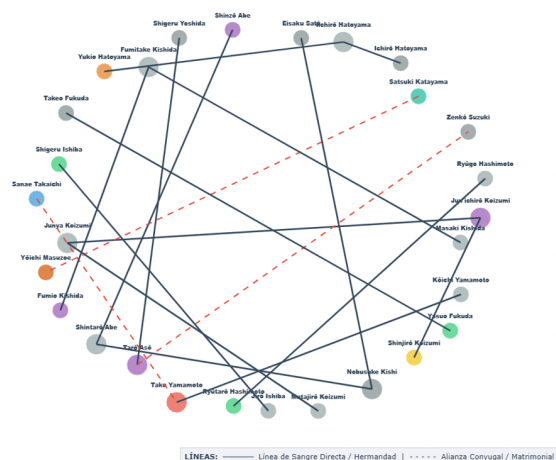
This near-total control of parliament reduces the traditional opposition to a position of legal irrelevance, which has been fragmented since the collapse of the Democratic Party of Japan’s (DPJ) interregnum between 2009 and 2012 under the failed administrations of Hatoyama, Kan and Noda. The opposition’s lack of institutional coordination today disables any ordinary mechanism of legislative oversight.

It is in view of the above that, in order to decipher the cohesion and permanence of this ruling elite, it is imperative to carry out a prosopographic analysis that reveals the endogamous networks, dynastic kinship and inheritance of seats that characterize political power in Japan. The LDP’s political system operates under a logic of caste reproduction, where second-, third- or fourth-generation hereditary politicians (*Nisei* or *Sansei*) monopolize cabinet positions through the intact

transfer of local support networks (*koenkai*), funding and family renown.

The map below is a visual representation of how access to the Kantei and the main ministries does not respond to dynamics of competitive democratic mobility, but to a distribution controlled by dominant dynastic nodes. The dark solid lines represent direct blood ties (parents, grandparents, and children) or fraternity, while the red dashed lines indicate conjugal alliances or extended political kinships. It is evident that these two configure a closed circuit which isolates the decision-making nucleus of the State from external actors, allowing a select group of second, third and fourth generation hereditary politicians (*Nisei* or *Sansei*) to obtain and preserve control of local districts (*koenkai*) and the main cabinet portfolios.

Figure 1. Family networks and dynastic influence of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)¹



Source: Author's own Elaboration

This phenomenon is complemented by strategic marriages formalized with descendants of high officials and industrial magnates, configuring an even more closed circle. In Sanae Takaichi's cabinet, this endogamous structure remains intact; the prime minister herself was married to Taku Yamamoto, a prominent LDP parliamentarian and former deputy minister, illustrating how personal alliances transcend individual trajectories and operate as a shielding and self-perpetuating mechanism for members of the active faction.

In Japan, this class of hereditary politicians are formally referred to as *Shūshi* (*Seshū*). Far from constituting a historical exception or mere biographical anecdotes, the presence of these family lineages constitutes the backbone of the recruitment of

¹The size of the nodes is directly proportional to the degree of centrality (number of direct links). Metric calculated by social network analysis (SRA) using the Kamada-Kawai algorithm in Python, based on the historical records of the PLD cabinets and the biographical records of the National Diet (2026).

cadres from the ruling group. Currently, it is estimated that approximately 35-40% of LDP members who hold a seat in the National Diet belong to this category either as the second, third or fourth generation, consolidating an institutionalized competitive advantage that perpetuates control of local districts.

In line with the above, these lineages are vertically integrated with the economic power concentrated in the Japanese Business Federation (*Keidanren*), the umbrella organization that articulates the interests of the large financial and industrial conglomerates known as *Keiretsu*. Although the historic *Zaibatsu* were formally disbanded by the Allied occupation forces after World War II, they mutated and reorganized into modern corporate networks (such as Mitsubishi, Mitsui, and Sumitomo). This intimate connection between the LDP and large-scale industry constitutes the third vertex of the so-called Iron Triangle (bureaucratic agencies, congressional committees, and interest groups).

The material basis of this triangle is sustained by an institutionalized scheme of regular political financing. The LDP permanently receives the bulk of its corporate donations directly from the *Keidanren*. Through the National Political Association (*Kokumin Seiji Kyōkai*), the financial arm of the business community, the conglomerates channel resources to the ruling faction. In exchange for this financial and logistical support, the Executive ensures the stability of corporate incomes through favorable fiscal policies, selective deregulation, and massive state subsidies.

In the current context of stealthy autocratization, this relationship has mutated into a logic of productive subordination oriented towards national defense. The *Keiretsu's* capital has aligned itself with the *Kantei's* guidelines to finance the reconfiguration of the critical minerals supply chain and absorb the million-dollar public contracts resulting from increased military spending. At the same time, this mechanism is lubricated by *Amakudari*, a practice known as the Descent from Heaven, an institutionalized dynamic where senior bureaucrats in ministries, upon retirement, go on to occupy managerial positions in large companies or legislative positions in the Diet.

This dynamic of the *Amakudari* directly penetrates the ranks of the ruling party, and it is estimated that around 25% of the current PLD bench is made up of these converted technocrats who operate through this revolving door scheme. A clear example is the transition of former cabinet members and former deputy ministers of strategic portfolios such as the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) to positions of senior advisers or advisors in energy and defense firms such as INPEX or subsidiaries of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. In fact, multiple of Takaichi's ministers have facilitated defense

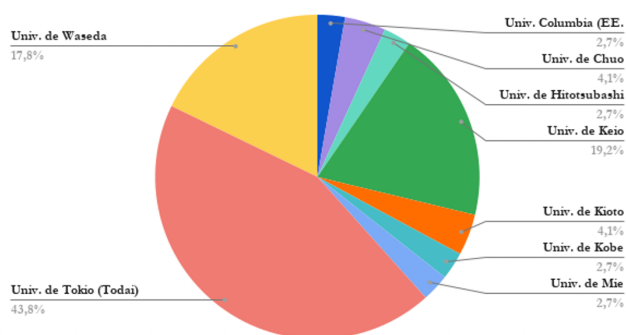
and energy contracts to corporations where his former university classmates now act as top executives.

In this way, the symbiosis between private capital, the recruitment of professional cadres and legislative control closes the circuit of state power. Transforming nationalist historical revisionism and material rearmament into a long-term project inherited in an inbred and systematically executed way that exacerbates the risk of finally making the removal of the restrictions of Article 9 of the Japanese constitution viable.

The educational “Golden Triangle” in the face of China’s regulatory siege in the STEM sector

The characterization of the mechanisms of screening and ideological conditioning in Japan’s elite universities reveals a sophisticated architecture of co-optation based on university clans. These dense networks of alumni act as a restrictive and highly exclusionary entry filter to institutional power. Operating in a bidirectional manner, these informal structures belonging to the *Gakubatsu* monitor both students active in factional debate circles and consolidated graduates. By entering the state bureaucracy and the boards of directors of the *Keiretsu*, its members ensure doctrinal homogeneity and systematically penalize any hint of dissidence or progressive stance that threatens the continuity of the ruling party.

Figure 2. Undergraduate training distribution in Japan’s main ministerial portfolios from April 2001 to June 2026

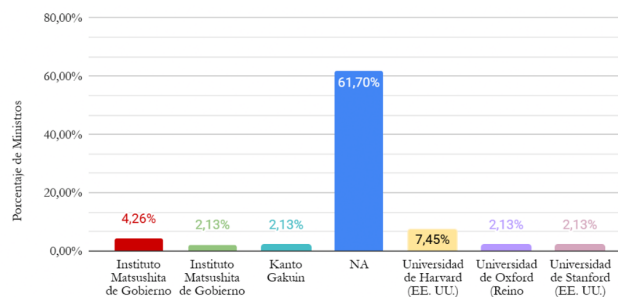


Source: Author’s own Elaboration

This structural asymmetry in the recruitment of political cadres is evident when analyzing the distribution of undergraduate degrees, where the statistical filtering of the elite reveals a strict academic oligopoly concentrated exclusively in three institutions that exceed the 2% threshold. The University of Tokyo (*Todai*) overwhelmingly dominates the system with 35.11%, followed by Keiō University with 14.89% and Waseda University with 13.83%. This educational “Golden Triangle” captures a combined 63.83% of the main historical ministerial portfolios, with *Todai* operating as the epicenter of high

technocracy and control ministries, while Keiō and Waseda act as nodes of articulation with corporate power.

Figure 3. Distribution of postgraduate and specialization studies in Japan’s main ministerial portfolios from April 2001 to June 2026



Source: Author’s own Elaboration

This concentration of school capital clearly materialises in the contemporary cabinet of Sanae Takaichi, where strategic portfolios such as Foreign Affairs and Economy depend directly on this closed circuit. On the other hand, the selection in postgraduate training reveals a clear strategic bifurcation when analyzing the only institutional nodes that exceed the exclusion criterion of 4%, Harvard University with 7.45% and the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management with 4.26%. This distribution exposes a double mechanism of systemic validation that combines external technocratic legitimization with endogenous political indoctrination, structuring leaderships beyond the traditional factions of the party.

Accreditation in elite Anglo-Saxon centers functions as a strategic “Foreign Factor” where the transits through Columbia and Georgetown made by figures such as Shinjirō Koizumi and Tarō Kōno also stand out. This insertion abroad seeks to strengthen the alliance with Washington and gain legitimacy in the West, so as to cushion the diplomatic impact of its marked domestic nationalist positions externally. In contrast, the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management operates as the ideological co-optation filter par excellence; a private incubator of pro-sovereignty cadres where Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi herself was trained, articulating networks of loyalty peripheral to the ordinary university curriculum in alliance with organizations such as *Nippon Kaigi*.

This internal political-educational shielding is directly intercepted by a global scenario dominated by the logics of a Second Cold War. On this new geopolitical chessboard, the deep strategic competition between China and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) is not primarily disputed for geographical possession or primary extraction of lanthanides, but for the industrial monopoly of the refining and advanced chemical separation chains. Faced with the threat of a monopoly

at the hands of Beijing on heavy rare earth metallurgy, the national security strategy promoted by the *Kantei* seeks to establish Japan as the nerve center of securitization and alternative technical processing to ensure the autonomy of its allies.

To materially make this safeguarding role viable, the Japanese government has transformed geopolitical vulnerability into milestones of technological sovereignty. The success achieved in early 2026 in the experimental extraction of rare earth-rich mud from the deep seabed on the island of Minamitori-shima endows the archipelago with strategic reserves of its own. However, the real challenge lies in the ability of *Keiretsu* to industrially process these minerals without relying on continental infrastructure. This technological reconversion seeks to ensure that Japanese refining patents operate as the axis of an armored supply against the recurrent export quotas and trade embargoes imposed by Beijing.

This battle for material sovereignty radically alters global flows of highly skilled human capital, directly affecting the mobility of STEM (*Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math*) professionals. Historically, thousands of students from India migrated to China's state-of-the-art universities and laboratories due to affordable tuition fees and available technical infrastructure. Upon graduation, a critical portion of these engineers were absorbed by Japanese corporations to be integrated into advanced industrial projects. However, the Beijing authorities have implemented a systematic blocking of this flow through rigorous national security audits and visa restrictions, preventing the indirect transfer of these capabilities to the Japanese ecosystem.

From a legal perspective, this countermeasure is articulated through the strict regulatory framework in force in the People's Republic of China. Using its Export Control Law and the recent reform of the Anti-Espionage Law in a punitive manner, the Chinese government expressly prohibits foreign graduates from sharing dual technical data or mineral processing methodologies with Japanese entities. Any attempt by these Indian engineers to work with companies or government agencies in Japan is criminally classified as a leak of state secrets, which leads to the immediate annulment of their academic credentials in China and the freezing of their cross-border financial flows.

At the same time, Beijing's regulatory siege extends to the island of Taiwan and to the Japanese corporate fabric based on the mainland. China's Ministry of Commerce has imposed severe administrative restrictions and asset locks on Taiwanese technology firms that collaborate in the development of micro-electronics or optical sensors for Japanese military rearmament programs, straining the control of advanced semiconductors. At the same time, subsidiaries of Japanese companies in China

face stifling compliance audits and bureaucratic hurdles under the Foreign Sanctions Law, drastically limiting their operability and the repatriation of key geological data.

In this sense, it is pertinent to say that the interaction between the ideological screening of the *Gakubatsu* and the regulatory blockade imposed by China on STEM human capital closes a circuit of high strategic complexity. While the Japanese ruling party internally purges its bureaucratic cadres to align them with the rearmament project and the reform of Article 9 of the Constitution, the external environment demands a costly reconfiguration of its talent chains together with the United States and Australia through the mobilization of the 20,000 million dollars agreed in the QUAD. In this way, the siege on the underwater deposits near the disputed islands and the securitization of critical minerals transform elite education into the real regional battlefield.

The Lanthanide Route: Maritime Securitization, Defense Expansion, and Article 9 Reform

The correlation of dependency between security in the lanthanide supply chain, the exponential expansion of military spending, and the eventual reform of the restrictions of Article 9 of the Constitution is articulated beyond conjecture by starting from the new paradigm, one in which "economic security" (*Keizai Anzen Boshō*). The archipelago's extreme vulnerability to Beijing's unilateral embargoes and quotas has forced the *Kantei* to redefine logistical bottlenecks not as mere trade challenges, but as direct threats to state sovereignty. This doctrinal shift instrumentalizes the increase in the defense budget, transforming industrial resilience into an indispensable vector of military projection. In this way, the protection of the technological material base serves as a definitive catalyst for deconstructing institutional pacifism, legitimizing constitutional reform as an imperative for survival.

In this sense, the historic increase in military spending, projected to consolidate the threshold of 2% of GDP, directly finances the securitization of maritime routes for the supply of critical minerals. These unprecedented budget allocations pay for the acquisition of long-range counterstrike capabilities, destroyers equipped with the Aegis combat system, and the overall modernization of the Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF). This logistical militarization radically alters Japan's naval operational role, shifting its posture from passive coastal protection to active control of Maritime Communication Lines (SLOCs) in the East and South China Seas. Thus, the deployment of military assets has its primary tactical justification in the armouring of rare earth shipments from Australia or from the Minamitori-shima underwater fields.

However, this budgetary and operational escalation deepens the regional security dilemma and critically exacerbates the diplomatic crisis with Beijing. The Chinese government interprets the Japanese naval projection and its integration into the QUAD's maritime surveillance and patrol mechanisms as a strategy of hostile geopolitical encirclement disguised as an economic contingency; in retaliation, China is instrumentalizing its monopoly advantage by tightening export controls on high-performance magnets and chemical separation technologies aimed at Japanese conglomerates. This dynamic transforms trade interdependence into a zero-sum scenario, where every Japanese advance toward supply autonomy triggers Chinese naval incursions into the Senkaku Islands, turning the seafloor into a space prone to kinetic conflict.

Therefore, one can speak of an indissoluble link between the security of the lanthanids, material rearmament and the regulatory change that closes the circuit of the Japanese state's grand strategy to consolidate its strategic autonomy, deter Chinese hegemony and consolidate itself as a comprehensive security power in the Indo-Pacific. The fragility of the rare earth supply chain operates as the material catalyst that enables expansive military financing and the conversion of trade routes into defensive exclusion zones. At the same time, the resulting diplomatic friction with China provides the political capital needed to erode the remaining legislative and citizen resistance to the final amendment to Article 9. The suppression of constitutional pacifism then ceased to be a mere ideological aspiration of the nationalist factions of the PLD, consolidating itself as the institutional consequence of a State forced to guarantee its industrial survival through militarized containment.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the dissection of this Japanese grand strategy demonstrates that the country operates under a model of elite state capture. This is not a classical dictatorship, but a system of political and institutional endogamy where access to real power is strictly restricted by three interconnected filters, the direct family lineage, the university clans (*Gakubatsu*), and the corporate loyalties of the *Keiretsu*. This dynastic and industrial structure ensures that the recruitment of government cadres remains within a closed loop that self-perpetuates the strategic interests of the ruling conservative faction.

The ideological screening of this elite is consolidated from higher education. As previously analyzed, bureaucratic and legislative control depends on the golden triangle, complemented in postgraduate studies by external legitimation in U.S. centers and the endogenous indoctrination of the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management. These alumni networks not only

monopolize the main ministerial portfolios, but also operate as an informal filter in alliance with networks such as *Nippon Kaigi*, ensuring that only profiles aligned with sovereign defense reach decision-making positions.

Under this logic, the administration of Sanae Takaichi has managed to consolidate the political objective that Shinzō Abe left unfinished, to align the “sons of power” by including key dynastic heirs such as Shinjirō Koizumi, along with the emerging right-wing parties. This factional cohesion has neutralized the internal fractures of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and has unified the executive. The material support of this alignment remains the modern Iron Triangle, where large conglomerates channel financing through the *Keidanren* in exchange for favorable fiscal policies and state subsidies.

Finally, this dynastic and economic framework finds its external justification in the crisis of critical minerals vis-à-vis China and the need to securitize the maritime routes within the QUAD. This slowly but surely constructed war, where industrial resilience in the face of the blockade of STEM human capital is paid for by the expansion of defense spending, technically translates as the definitive transition from postwar constitutional pacifism to dynastic militarist realism. In this way, the removal of Article 9 restrictions represents the final institutional step in ensuring the survival of this ecosystem of power.

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