

《英语新闻：安倍计划重修和平宪法》

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Since he took the helm in Japan for a second time on Dec 26, 2012, hawkish Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been paving the way for Japan to "escape from the postwar regime".

For him, postwar Japan is a legacy of the US occupation that has deprived the country of national pride and weakened its traditional mores.

He has a vision of a "beautiful" Japan and keeps his conservative master plan up his sleeve.

It is no secret that Abe is at heart a right-wing nationalist. Throughout his political career, he has called for the overturning of Japan's postwar pacifist Constitution.

But it is a hard nut to crack.

In the first year of his second premiership, he tried hard to change Japan without changing the Constitution.

He has emphasized security while putting Japan on a package of Abenomics — a mix of reflation, government spending and a growth strategy designed to jolt the economy out of the suspended animation that has gripped it for more than two decades.

Some Japanese analysts take his Abenomics as an approach that, in reality, is about national security. In their words, only a wealthy Japan can defend itself.

His government's first defense white paper, released in July, heralded a significant departure from the past in tone and substance. Gone is the assertion from the previous report that "peace can be secured by making diplomatic and other efforts comprehensively along with defense capabilities".

Recently, he centralized all military decision-making in a new US-style National Security Council that comes directly under the prime minister's office.

On Dec 17, the Abe Cabinet approved Japan's first ever national security strategy, on which the new national defense program guidelines and the new mid-term defense procurement plan are based. Those two documents were also adopted.

The Japanese prime minister has spoken of the need to "stand up to China", which has been presented as a present and future threat that Japan will have to address.

Japan has a military — a large and modern one. But the Abe Cabinet announced its new plan to increase defense spending by 5 percent over the next five years and transform the country's so-called self-defense forces into a full-fledged military.

Abe has sketched out a doctrine of geopolitical rebranding for Japan. Aiming to make Japan a world military power, he pledges that his country will "contribute proactively to global peace".

An expert questioned his motives.

Wu Huaizhong, a researcher of Japanese political and defense policy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said Abe has often interpreted his slogan of "proactive pacifism" as his attempt to secure and improve Japan's international security circumstances. But the slogan serves as a means by which Japan can gain a bigger say in global security issues, expanding the influence of the nation's armed forces.

Japan's departure from the postwar regime rings alarm bells, given that Abe is gripped by a backward-looking, distorted view of history that paints Japan as a victim, suffering at the hands of the victors. He wants to recast Japan's wartime history in less apologetic tones. He intends to revise Japanese history textbooks in a way that will boost the sense of patriotism among Japanese people.

The next security goals on Abe's agenda are to lift the ban on allowing Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense and to revise the Constitution.

In a recent interview with the Wall Street Journal, Akie Abe unveiled her husband's political goals. "First and foremost, I think it's constitutional revision. That is what he has wanted to do the most since becoming a member of parliament. ... He is moving in that direction."

With the Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition partner the New Komeito sharing a comfortable majority in the parliament's two chambers, Abe should be able to pass legislation freely.

Thereafter, the only remaining obstacle to changing Japan's Constitution would be a popular referendum.

With the launch pad ready, Abe will shoot for the moon before his term ends.

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