"To Protect Japan's Peace We Need Guns and Rockets:" The Military Uses of Popular Culture in Current-day Japan

Sabine Fruhstuck

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「日本の平和を守るためにゃ、鉄砲とロケットがいりますよ」ーー現代日本における自衛隊のポップカルチュア利用

Sabine Frühstück

Let's Join the Jietai

Amongst you, are there those
who wish to join Jieitai?
who wish to try your chance?
Jieitai's looking for capable men.

[refrain]
Let's join, join, join Jieitai
If you join Jieitai, this world is paradise.
The manliest of men all join
Jieitai and scatter like blossoms.

Those of you who wish to do sports,
you are always welcome to Jieitai.
Spears, guns, we have everything.
Anyway, the body is your capital.
[refrain]

Those of you who take interest
in guns and tanks and planes,
you are always welcome to Jieitai.
We'll teach you with kindly care.
[refrain]

To protect Japan's peace
we need guns and rockets.
We'll also have America to help us;
let's beat the evil Soviets and China.
[refrain]

Jieitai's looking for capable men,
regardless of age or educational background.
We look for those who, for the sake of
the fatherland, are meek to the end.
[refrain]

"Let's Join Jieitai," anti-war lyrics by Takada Wataru, 1969, set to Pete Seeger's tune (original lyrics by Malvina Reynolds, Andorra, 1962),is available in Takada's rendition here.

The original tune quoted above, "Let's Join Jieitai," was mockingly performed and recorded by Takada Wataru in 1969 as an anti-war song. The National Broadcasting Corporation immediately banned the song as Japan mobilized in support of the US in the Vietnam War, an incident that became emblematic of the fraught relationship between the Self-Defense Forces and Japanese popular culture since the end of the Asia-Pacific War.

While popular culture across the political spectrum has dealt with the imperial armed forces and the Asia-Pacific War (Penney 2008, Gerow 2006), it has been hesitant to embrace the Self-Defense Forces, however, the Self-Defense Forces' public relations apparatus has long acknowledged the power of popular culture. This

essay is about how the Self-Defense Forces tap into Japan's popular culture and try to fill a void of military representation by employing the techniques and strategies of popular cultural production in their public relations, image-making and self-presentation efforts. Like armed forces in most democratic countries today, the Self-Defense Forces engage in a variety of such efforts. And like most public relations efforts of armed forces around the world, these activities in Japan are culturally and historically specific, due to the experience of militarism and war; the present-day social, political and economic roles of a military establishment in the country in which it is supposed to organize, control and possibly exercise violence in the name of the state; and by the popular culture within which these efforts are embedded.

At least since the Gulf War of 1990–1991, the separation of the military from the civilian sphere that had characterized most of the postwar era has begun to seem obsolete to the Self-Defense Forces leadership. For the most part, they have symbolically "disarmed" the Self-Defense Forces by normalizing and domesticating the military so that they would look like other (formerly) state-run service organizations such as the railway and postal systems. They have also aimed at individuating and personalizing Self-Defense Forces service members. At the same time, they made conventional notions of militarism appear spectacular within the confines of carefully choreographed live-fire performances. At a time when their mission has been extended—to Cambodia, the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan—the Self-Defense Forces also have begun to utilize, appropriate, and manipulate popular culture, in order to glamorize their image and align themselves domestically with other state agencies and globally with other internationally operating armed forces and other organizations. For the Self-Defense Forces, these attempts have been major tasks that have been pursued almost in a vacuum, due to the disjuncture between the Self-Defense Forces and Japanese popular culture.

In 1993, as Self-Defense Forces were being dispatched to Cambodia, the Japanese Defense Agency (JDA) established a Department of Public Relations within the Division of Personnel Training in order to train officers in a variety of public relations skills. Today, roughly one thousand service members are entrusted with public relations efforts within the JDA and in individual offices on bases across the country. The Self-Defense Forces' public relations activities are directed inward to protect the troops from internal frailties and doubts, increase morale and help craft and maintain a positive military identity among the ranks, as well as outward to wider Japanese society and the world to diffuse distrust and build appreciation.

These different forms of self-presentation attract and engage a wide array of people, ranging from young women from the vicinity of bases who participate in JDA-sponsored beauty contests to mostly male military technology fans who come to the live firing exercises, from very young readers of their comics to passers-by at a billboard with a Self-Defense Forces recruitment poster. They set competing and occasionally contradicting signals about the Self-Defense Forces' tasks and the character of their service members, at one time camouflaging their potential for violence by symbolically disarming them and at another showing off their military prowess. A set of recurring images that dominate public relations material and attempts at self-valorization collectively suggest that the Self-Defense Forces are necessary for everybody's safety and security; that they are ordinary men and women capable of extraordinary acts; that they are both powerful and carefully tamed; and that they can militarily defend Japan if they absolutely must.

The following analysis begins with recruitment posters as manifestations of the self-presentation of the Self-Defense Forces that is directed at a

large, anonymous public which holds a variety of views of the military. From there I draw two wider circles: to material that is specifically produced for children and youths to convince them of the necessity but also the "likability" and "coolness" of the Self-Defense Forces; and to an examination of military events that are organized by the Self-Defense Forces to publicly celebrate themselves, such as anniversary festivities, open house days, parades and live firing demonstrations that appeal to an overwhelmingly male segment of the population that is already sympathetic to the military. Collectively, these techniques of persuasion familiarize well-defined segments of the Japanese population with the Self-Defense Forces and, at the same time, assure service members of their professionalism and importance.

Public Relations Posters and Civilianization

> We have seamanship, seamanship, seamanship for love!
> We have seamanship, seamanship, seamanship for peace! [in English]
> Japan is beautiful.
> Peace is beautiful.
> The Maritime Self-Defense Force. [in Japanese]
> (Public relations video clip for the MSDF, posted on the JDA website in 2005)

Since the end of the cold war that briefly offered a glimpse of a more peaceful world and saw an increase in skepticism towards the state use of violence in many countries, military establishments the world over have found it necessary to intensify their ever-more sophisticated public relations efforts. The U.S. armed forces, for instance, which remain the highest rated government institution (Leal 2005:123) advertise an array of notions ranging from technology and speed to adventure, risk-taking, and the opportunity to finance higher education or achieve some measure of self-actualization. U.S. Air Force slogans recently posted in California, for instance, appeal to the fascination with the military capacity to produce speed, promising potential Air Force recruits to "Move at the Speed of Light." The U.S. Army addresses the human element with slogans such as "An Army of One," "Be All You Can Be," and "The Uniform Didn't Change Me. Earning the Right to Wear It Did." The U.S. National Guard hopes to entice young men and women to "Be One of America's Most Powerful Weapons." Emphasizing their special qualities and capabilities, the U.S. Marine Corps prides itself on being "The Few. The Proud. The Marines."

Situated close to the other end of the spectrum on public militarism, the German military promotes the "citizen in uniform" who is committed to defending the freedom and rights of the German population in hot and cold wars and is supposed to be a highly efficient soldier. For him – and, more recently, also for her – military training means not only producing effective troops but also functioning as a kind of "experiential therapy in freedom and democracy" (Bröckling 1997:298). A recent German military promotion slogan in Berlin announced, "We Build the Future" ("Wir bauen Zukunft"). One of Japan's neighbors combines similar self-presentational references in a number of posters posted in 2005 in Taipei. The Taiwanese army promises, "Challenges that come at the ultimate speed. They belong to no one but you," "Join the volunteer army: The future is in your hands," and "Joining the Army brings smiles to people's faces: Confidence, professionalism, commitment!" Even further removed from the kinds of aesthetizations of violence, action and technology in U.S. recruitment materials, the Self-Defense Forces rely primarily on vague slogans, a decisively non-violent symbolism, an unambiguously gendered imagery, a glaring absence of references to the nation, patriotism or other concepts that the Japanese state once had exploited for the purposes of war and

imperialism, and the frequent use and appropriations of English phrases. In Japan, public relations posters – more than 100,000 copies of each are printed and distributed all over Japan – address an anonymous wider society that happens to live or walk by billboards on which they are posted next to information about garbage collection, fire exercises, festivals, obituaries, and other announcements that are of interest to the local community.

Figure 1: "Self-Defense Force service members recruitment: We appreciate it – young strength. There is a future to which I want to connect. There are people I want to help. There is a land I want to protect" (Self-Defense Forces recruitment poster, 2005. Photographed by Jennifer Robertson).

Constituting specific aesthetizations of the Self-Defense Forces that are unique compared to those of other militaries, they are only slightly bigger than 1.5 feet by 1.5 feet. The language of "the nation," informal pronouns for "you," "pride," "friend," and technology of the 1950s and 1960s have given way to more general messages about Japan's "youth," the "population," the "public," the "future," the desire to "protect" and, most prominently, "peace."

The concept of "peace" has been embodied mostly by female figures. Since 1992, professional models who are also well-known television personalities have been depicted standing clad in military uniforms and proclaiming "Peace People Japan, Come On!" The phrase "come on" of this slogan is a word play upon the last name of Kamon Yōko, who is known for her songs accompanying animated films. In other depictions, female uniformed office workers plead, "Please bring one big dream to us," while female uniformed mechanics take "Step by Step" [in English] in order to become "Shining people at a workplace of which one can be proud." Next to a picture of a female member of the ASDF, which covers half of the poster, one finds the slogan, "Believe. Turn Towards a Steady Dream." One of the newest among several recently introduced phrases is the slogan "For the Public." More assertive slogans such as "Can You Stand on Your Own Feet?" or the encouraging "There is a You that Can Follow a Code" are set off by posters on which cute little dogs bark, "I love peace!" Another poster carries the appeal, "Young power that protects peace." The slogan beneath a child standing somewhat forlornly in front of a combat helicopter on a GSDF recruitment poster reads, "Always for our people" [in English] and a smiling young woman firmly says, "It is my path, so I decide it myself – You take a future in your hand [sic]!" [in English]. Yet another 2005 poster features an ascending combat plane and the slogan, "There is a friend. There is a dream. There is pride. Self-Defense Forces service members recruitment." In 2003, a Self-Defense Forces poster featured the all-women pop group Morning Musume in an effort to target high school students. The members of the group appear in their pop costumes and are crying out "Doing One's Best Feels Good – Go! Go! Peace!"

These new slogans and imagery represent quite a leap from earlier recruitment and promotion

efforts. Throughout the 1970s, the public relations officers in the JDA envisioned male service members as the ones to protect, and women, whether service members or civilians, as the ones to be protected. More importantly, however, references to the nation, pride and defense were rare and did not appear in combination with female figures (Satō 2000:64–65). The slogans "The pride in protecting the country" from 1975 and 1976 and "The desire to protect the country" from 1977 had been accompanied exclusively by male figures. When women were featured together with men, however, slogans refer to "tomorrow" and the "future," as in the phrases "Young power that protects the happiness of tomorrow" of 1969, "Protect the peace of Japan" from 1970, "The pride of protecting this smiling face" from 1981, and "Encounter with tomorrow," and "Let's talk about tomorrow," among others (Satō Fumika 2000:64).

More generally, the language of military public relations posters is reminiscent of the forms of speech found in Japanese advertising for government agencies and large corporations. The 1 December 2000 issue of a GSDF base newsletter, for example, carries the headline, "With the Local Population Into the 21st Century!" (Chiiki to tomo ni 21 seiki e!), a slogan that could have been found on any communal newsletter for a variety of different institutions ranging from community centers to homes for the elderly (Frühstück 2002). Brochures published by and for individual bases, as another example, carry slogans such as "We Want People Who Love Peace – JDA" (Bōeichō 2000); and numerous GSDF publications promote the idea that "There Is Somebody to Protect – GSDF" (Mamoritai hito ga iru; Rikujō Jieitai 1998:cover; all emphases are the author's). Acknowledging the vagueness of these slogans the GSDF public relations division explains the latter as follows:

> The "somebody" of "There Is Somebody to Protect – GSDF" represents the family one loves, the people of one's community, and the beautiful nature and culture of our country. The feeling that one wants to protect the people whom one loves represents the strong wish of the entire GSDF […] (Rikujō Bakuryō Kanbu Kōhōshitsu 2006: back cover).

Similarly vague, the GSDF logo features two open hands that form a bowl in which there is an abstract human figure. Nothing indicates that this is the logo of the military rather than of a soccer team or a spa (Bōeichō 2001:246). Hence, there too a lengthy explanation attempts to clarify the concept behind the image as follows:

> The center symbolizes the people and the Japanese islands that the GSDF wants to protect. The hand to the left signifies 'sturdiness and strength,' the one to the right stands for 'gentleness' […] (Rikujō Bakuryō Kanbu Kōhōshitsu 2006: back cover).

The new preference for references to time (future) rather than nation (past) is further emphasized by the use of the English language. English words and phrases are commonly used in Japanese advertising. In military public relations efforts they signal the alignment of military recruitment efforts with advertising for other kinds of services and products. As I have shown elsewhere, the use of English also helps remove the present-day military language from that of wartime Japan, a practice that permeates military life to its very core and helps to align the Self-Defense Forces to the rest of the world by deflecting from the nation state Japan. Instead of "aikoku" for "patriotism," for instance, such materials use "the love of country," "the love of

people," or "the love of peace," all in English as, for instance, in the MSDF video clip quoted at the beginning of this section.

Collectively, depictions of uniformed men and women in public relations materials individualize and thus humanize the military experience in present-day Japan, but the iconography of Self-Defense Forces recruitment posters also has been unambiguously gendered. Even though the notion of "pride" recently has returned to military public relations posters, it is embodied not by the stern-looking young men of the 1960s and 1970s but by the cheerfully smiling women who appear in combat or dress uniforms in decisively civilian settings. As Satō Fumika (2000) has shown, until the late 1960s when the Self-Defense Forces began to accept female volunteers into positions other than nurses, not a single poster had featured only women, and only a handful of the posters published by the JDA had included a woman in a group of men. Then, the Self-Defense Forces clearly and exclusively targeted men as potential volunteers. During the next twenty years up to the implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in 1986 and the subsequent active effort by the Self-Defense Forces to recruit more women into their ranks, women appeared on more than a third of all posters, but only a small portion of these posters exclusively featured women. Today, in contrast to the actual ranks of the Self-Defense Forces, women are vastly over-represented in public relations posters. Almost 80 percent of all Self-Defense Forces posters feature women. The use of women in recruitment images appears as an attempt to garner legitimacy through demonstrating the Self-Defense Forces' efforts to comply with the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL), which was promulgated in 1986 and considerably tightened in April 1999. The large number of women represented in posters as opposed to the ranks of the Self-Defense Forces resonates with the efforts at civilianization; it is the same message of equality that all government offices try to transmit to the public. The Self-Defense Forces suggest that they are like any other governmental organization. The numerical imbalance of women on posters compared to women among the ranks is congruent with advertisement practices in civilian markets, but in Self-Defense Forces posters images of women also serve as the technology of manipulation of such notions as peace and pride.

Figure 2: Today, public relations and recruitment posters of the Self-Defense Forces typically feature young, cheerfully smiling women and decisively non-militaristic slogans such as "Peace People Japan – Come On."

Female figures render benign the notion of "pride" that otherwise could be associated with nationalism and imperialism. They are promoted as the peaceful gender: their smiling faces seem to suggest that there are nice, pretty women even in the Self-Defense Forces, and that they would not be here if the military were a violent, strange, dangerous organization. Representations of women in recruitment posters work in this fashion because of the naturalized pairing of "woman" and "peace" that mirrors a style of

wartime propaganda which had established a strict gender division of men as combatants at the front and women as mothers, wives and supporters at home. I have shown elsewhere (2006) that these neat gender boundaries are highly ideological and, during the Asia-Pacific War, were continuously transgressed by both men and women. It must suffice to note here that these boundaries have remained firmly entrenched in postwar society. The Self-Defense Forces' public relations apparatus merely has been exploiting them in recruitment posters.

Another set of characteristics of Self-Defense Forces recruitment posters are the rarity with which they feature men and women in uniform rather than civilian clothes and the marginal representation of the tools of their trade – weaponry. Working hard and quietly to convince young men and women out there that they too could become service members, despite or because being perfectly ordinary Japanese citizens, bodies on recruitment posters are slim and trim. They do not reveal any special talents or characteristics that would make them particularly suitable for a military career. There faces are pretty, relaxed and clean and they do not indicate any experience of strenuous activities such as digging up soil or firing a weapon – the iconic indicators of military action on U.S. military recruitment posters and in Hollywood war films. The action, movement, fire and dust that often appears on U.S. recruitment images are substituted here with a quiet, sunny and relaxed atmosphere that exudes from bodies that are usually arranged statically and gazes that are directed sideways or into the distance but rarely directly and aggressively at passers-by. Except for the occasional combat plane that is arranged in the background or decoratively attended to by a mechanic, weaponry and soldiers performing potentially aggressive acts such as shooting rifles or firing tanks hardly appear at all in recruitment posters. On the very rare occasions when weaponry is depicted explicitly, the faces of young, smiling women always offset it. In short, "protecting peace for the public" is represented as a calm, happy, clean and subdued affair, a message that further underlines the slogans on these posters and that stands in stark contrast to the reality of basic training that recruits will go through once they have joined the ranks.

Prince Pickles' World Peace

> It is a wonderful village! This country is really wonderful! People's hearts are warm and agriculture prospers!!! And more than everything else, there is peace!!! This country doesn't seem to have a Defense Force, right? It's just like I thought, in a peaceful country a Defense Force is unnecessary!! (Prince Pickles in Prince Pickles: The Journey to Peace (Pikurusu ōji: Heiwa e no tabi), Kuwahata and Tomonaga 1995:1).

These emphatically spoken words are Prince Pickles', the male mascot of the Self-Defense Forces that decorates some service members' business cards. Prince Pickles can be purchased as a plastic doll in different sizes, in tiny formats on a string to be attached to cell phones and bags, and as fluorescent stickers. He is also the hero of three cartoon volumes first published during the early 1990s by the public relations division within the JDA: Prince Pickles: The Journey to Peace (Pikurusu ōji: Heiwa e no tabi), Prince Pickles' Self-Defense Forces Diary (Pikkurusu ōji no Jieitai nikki), and Prince Pickles' Self-Defense Forces Diary II (Pikkurusu ōji no Jieitai nikki 2). Between fourteen and thirty-four pages thick, the cartoon booklets were part of a larger campaign aimed at aggressively establishing new images of the Self-Defense Forces in Japanese society. The campaign was choreographed by the JDA and designed by Dentsu, one of Japan's largest advertising corporations with close ties to the

government, which is also heavily invested in the production and marketing of cartoons. The use of Prince Pickles and his female counterpart Miss Parsley is constitutive of a larger-scale attempt to bridge the gap between the Self-Defense Forces and civilian society not just by aestheticizing the military in the recruitment materials examined above but, in this case, by trivializing and infantilizing the Self-Defense Forces' tasks in comics for a young readership of potential recruits.

Ostensibly directed at children and youth, the story of Prince Pickles integrates the aesthetic elements of a fairy tale (the central figure is a prince; the characters' names are fantasy names; a contemporary lesson is to be learned) with the didactic impulse of explaining the significance of the Self-Defense Forces aimed at persuading the Japanese population to sympathize with and appreciate the military. At the beginning, Prince Pickles stands on the hills outside his father's castle and welcomes a wonderfully sunny day in Paprika Kingdom. Suddenly he hears rapid marching noises. A group of soldiers from the Defense Force approaches. Observing the tough training of the soldiers, Prince Pickles becomes outraged at the sight of a commander ordering a young man named Pepper to do a series of push-ups more quickly. To Prince Pickles' critique the commander replies – making a point that Pepper later repeats – that the kingdom needs a well-trained Defense Force in order to maintain peace and "protect the country." Prince Pickles remains unconvinced. He wanders about while reflecting on his conviction that the kingdom could do without a Defense Force. There has been no war in a hundred years and he is sure that peace will continue. The same evening, Prince Pickles is summoned to see his father, the king. "When I die," the king says, "you will follow me as the king of Paprika Kingdom. Until then, however, you will need to learn a lot, including the necessity of the Defense Force!" "Tomorrow," the king announces, "you will leave on a journey. While you travel you will learn plenty and hopefully find answers to your questions on your own." Prince Pickles wanders off. The last picture of the day shows him standing on his balcony, deep in thought (Kuwahata and Tomonaga 1995:1–5).

A few days later, Prince Pickles' arrival is announced in Broccoli Kingdom. A young man who introduces himself as Carrot welcomes him at the gate. Prince Pickles explains to him that he has come to learn about his own country. Carrot volunteers to give him a tour of the countryside where farmers attend to the fields. Carrot introduces Prince Pickles to the village head, Asparagus, and his daughter Parsley. Prince Pickles is immediately smitten by Parsley who welcomes him, the Prince of "such a wonderful country," and offers to show the two of them around. Prince Pickles now wears a superman-style coat, a Kamikaze-style headband and a sword.

Over dinner at the home of the village head, Asparagus asks Prince Pickles how he liked the village. Prince Pickles answers how wonderfully peaceful he finds it and how much he appreciates the absence of a defense force. An embarrassed Carrot responds that in fact there was a Defense Force. "Next to us is the Evil Empire which has a huge military," Carrot explains. Prince Pickles laughs out loud. To the startled faces of his hosts he repeats that there has not been a war for decades. Later he shares his thoughts with Carrot: "You are scared, Carrot, right? Fears for the future of the kingdom only scare our people. So let's bury them!!" They go to sleep. The next morning, Parsley accompanies Prince Pickles to the rice fields where he learns that this year's harvest is expected to be poor. Parsley tells him that the neighboring empire will most probably face the same problem, a situation that scares her because their need may prompt them to attack. The story cuts to the Evil Empire (Kuwahata and Tomonaga 1995:6–10) where a fat, mean-looking emperor stuffs himself with food and wine. His character as a despot who suppresses his people

is indicated by his subservient and anxious butler. Eventually Gōma's butler tells his master that there will not be any food left for the winter if he continues to eat so much now. Gōma gets angry and announces that if they do not have food of their own they will have to steal it from somewhere else.

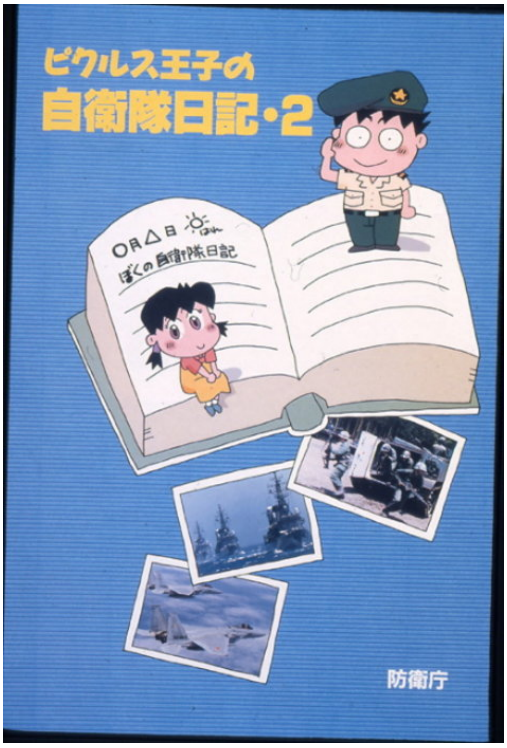

Figure 3: Throughout the two cartoon volumes, Prince Pickles: The Journey to Peace and Prince Pickles Self-Defense Forces Diary II**, Prince Pickles frequently changes his outfit from the various uniforms of the Self-Defense Forces to fantasy costumes that emphasize his superhuman spirit and commitment to world peace.**

He sends his docile servant over to Broccoli Kingdom to let them know that there will be war if they do not hand over all their food.
The story cuts back to Broccoli Kingdom. Upon receipt of the bad news, the ministers and the king of Broccoli contemplate their options.

One minister suggests that they ask Paprika Kingdom for help. Another remarks that the only role of the Defense Force of Paprika Kingdom is to "secure their own borders." Yet another minister says that Paprika Kingdom must see that they do not have much choice and could be attacked by Gōma Empire as well. Carrot eavesdrops on these consultations. Alarmed by the situation, he jumps on his horse to ride over to Paprika Kingdom and ask the king, Prince Pickles' father, for help. The king refuses to help, reiterating that "the Defense Force is only for the protection of our country" and that it "cannot be deployed for the sake of other countries." A crushed Carrot returns home (Kuwahata and Tomonaga 1995:9–14).

In the meantime, Prince Pickles has a picnic with Parsley. At the very moment he attempts to kiss Parsley, they hear the sound of marching. Gōma's military approaches. Prince Pickles cries out, "What is the [Broccoli] Police Force doing?" Parsley is scared and helpless. Prince Pickles asks Parsley to go to a safe place while he warns the village, but she insists on coming with him. In the village they warn the field workers to hide women and children and tell the men to stay and defend the village. To their surprise, everybody – including the men – just flees. Parsley cries out, "How can they give up their own village?!" Gōma's military men attack Prince Pickles. Prince Pickles has superhuman strength but eventually is knocked unconscious. Parsley is carried away into the evil emperor's castle (Kuwahata and Tomonaga 1995:20–27).

Carrot, his father and other people from the village find Prince Pickles. The village and all fields have been destroyed. Prince Pickles learns from Carrot that his father had denied help. He does not understand why his father had not sent the Defense Force. The king of Broccoli explains to him that they used to have their own Defense Force but since there had been peace for such a long time, they had kept only the Border Police Force. The king suggests that their military weakness invited Gōma's attack (Kuwahata and Tomonaga 1995:30). Suddenly it occurs to Prince

Pickles that Parsley is gone. He gets on a horse and rides home to see his father and mobilize the Defense Force. During the ride he realizes two things: That in order "to protect what one loves one needs strength;" and that "the Defense Force undergoes tough exercises for precisely this purpose."

In the next series of images, Prince Pickles argues with his father about the deployment of the Defense Force. His father insists that the Defense Force cannot leave the country. When they are told that Gōma's forces are about to cross the borders of Paprika Kingdom, the king changes his mind, makes Prince Pickles the chief commander of the Defense Force, and orders him to defend the borders of Paprika Kingdom (Kuwahata and Tomonaga 1995:34). Prince Pickles proudly takes on the task and miraculously emerges as a capable military leader.

Until this point nothing has indicated to the reader that Prince Pickles is qualified for such a role. Prince Pickles and his troops keep out the attacking forces. The moment Gōma's troops withdraw, Parsley emerges out of nowhere and rushes into Prince Pickles' arms. The troops cheer. Prince Pickles departs from the village to return home. Some men thank him and report to him that they will form the Broccoli Kingdom Defense Force as they have realized that a country has to defend itself on its own. Parsley asks him to come again. He smirks and promises to return with a ring. She blushes (Kuwahata and Tomonaga 1995:42–43).

The last sequence again shows a quiet and sunny sky over Paprika Kingdom and the castle. Prince Pickles and his father watch the Defense Force exercises together. He tells his father that he realizes now that a Defense Force is necessary even in a country at peace. The cartoon ends with a little speech by the King who once more spells out the moral of the story:

> The strength that is necessary to protect one's beloved parents, one's family, and one's lovers (koibito) must be neither too big nor too small. One can maintain peace only if one knows the world, entertains good relations with other countries, and works on the protection of the country (Kuwahata and Tomonaga 1995).

Similar to recruitment posters and other public relations material that circulates in wider society, this and other cartoon volumes that feature the Self-Defense Forces mascots carefully avoid direct references to the Japanese nation. Place names range from "vegetable countries" (the region around Paprika Kingdom) to "kingdoms" and "empires" as well as to "villages" and "land." National symbols such as a flag also are entirely absent from the iconography of the cartoon. The stories of Prince Pickles are structured as rites of passage. Their moral is threefold: Even in a peaceful country Self-Defense Forces are necessary. It is most appropriate to defend one's country on one's own. The protection of one's country is actually the same as the protection of one's parents, one's family and other loved ones. Consistent with other Self-Defense Forces recruitment materials, patriotism is individualized, personified, and broken down into the love for specific individuals who need to be protected against an evil force whose identity remains fuzzy. Whereas within the Self-Defense Forces the mascots Prince Pickles and Parsley personify a male and a female member of the three services, in the cartoon Prince Pickles at first represents the prototypical young Japanese or perhaps the Japanese public at large: peace-loving, well-meaning, naïve and ignorant. Only due to his experiences throughout the cartoon story is Prince Pickles transformed into a peace-loving, well-meaning, and informed citizen who has overcome his naiveté, who understands that the

Self-Defense Forces are necessary, and who gets married in the process, thus suggesting that knowledge and appreciation of the military can be or should become a normative element of growing up. On the small-scale, individual level of the cartoon, this underlying message perpetuates a prominent line of discourse about both the (normal) state and (the normal state of) masculinity that has been pursued in international and conservative national media: only a state with a military is normal and mature; and, only a man with military experience is a real man.

Public relations officers claim that the popular appeal of Prince Pickles, Parsley and other figures in the Prince Pickles volumes lies partly in their cute looks. They have small bodies and big round heads that are dominated by big round eyes. The strategic use of cuteness serves as a tool for achieving a more sympathetic public opinion. During the 1970s, cuteness became a marketing tool for almost everything in Japan (Watanabe 2001:137–138). As a sentiment, cuteness has been objectified, commodified and commercialized to a considerable degree, affording it a significant communicative potency among social actors (Riessland 1997, Miller 2000, McVeigh 2000:153–155). The JDA has tapped into that potential. Numerous government agencies, corporations, universities and other organizations in Japan each have their own mascots – cute fantasy figures that often appear in pairs of male and female. In the realm of the military, the creation of Prince Pickles and Parsley constitutes an attempt at the normalization of and familiarization with the Self-Defense Forces, which are presented so as to appear like other organizations and governmental agencies.

With the publication of the Prince Pickles cartoon series and the subsequent publication of the defense white paper in comic format, the Self-Defense Forces also appropriated a late 1980s trend. During that time, government agencies and large corporations began to produce and use a new brand of adult comic books that addressed general information, politics, business, literary, documentary and education. Sharon Kinsella (2000:71) has found that this new brand was characterized by a political revisionism apparent in the implicit encouragement of readers to rethink their (critical) views of large corporations, the Diet, and the military forces; and it culminated in the production of a Manga History of Japan (Manga Nihon no rekishi) commissioned by the academic and literary publisher Chūō Kōronsha, a 48-volume work that later was recognized by the Ministry of Education and Culture as suitable for educational purposes at state schools. Other companies selected information comics as their medium of choice for communication and public relations exercises; as did governmental institutions such as the Printing Bureau of the Ministry of Finance, which decided in 1994 to publish the Environment White Paper in comic book format. In each of these public relations comic books, company operations are presented not as profit-making enterprises, but as public services (Kinsella 2000:73, 77, 79–87, 95). Believers in the effectiveness of information in comic format argue that comics create the motivation to read among people who have little time to do so. Comics work as the hook that pulls people in and gets them to read the text information (Schodt 2004(1996):297). Thus, the use of comics by the Self-Defense Forces has been a strategic move to manipulate and recreate their image in a format that already had been adopted and normalized by other government agencies and large corporations. The story of the Self-Defense Forces mascots Prince Pickles and Parsley works to improve the Self-Defense Forces' visibility as a nationwide and internationally operative organization. Furthermore, the story of Prince Pickles represents the Self-Defense Forces' public relations efforts to actively create and disseminate images of themselves that the Self-Defense Forces consider suitable for mass consumption and specifically for consumption by

children and youth.

In contrast to recruitment posters and comics and other textual and visual attempts to win over an amorphous public whose attitude towards the military is assumed by the public relations apparatus of the Self-Defense Forces to be a mixture of ignorance, disinterest and hostility, the Self-Defense Forces also rely and work on segments of the public that are willing to embrace displays of a more conventional and aggressive militarism. This radically different image of the Self-Defense Forces is partly enacted at open house days and anniversary festivals but comes to the fore with most force at live firing demonstrations, the object of analysis in the next section.

Celebrations of Militarism

Each year the Self-Defense Forces organize dozens of mass events that are open to the public and designed to showcase soldiers' workplaces, present their skills, new equipment and achievements over the year, and – most of all – display their humanity. Self-Defense Forces events cover a broad range of entertainment efforts. Open house days, anniversary festivals, parades, and live firing demonstrations draw from thousands to tens of thousands of people onto a Self-Defense Forces base or exercise ground that is normally off-limits for civilians. The Self-Defense Forces Music Festival, for example, is held annually in the Budo Hall in Tokyo and draws an audience of over 40,000. The festival features one thousand service member musicians who play primarily marching music during a series of six concerts over two days. Scantily dressed female special guests from the pop music scene enliven their performance. Annual joint concerts with all three service branches in March feature classic music in the Suntory Hall in Tokyo or the Symphony Hall in Osaka and draw audiences of about 2,800 for each of two concerts. Individual bases open their gates for various self-celebrations as well: As its main attraction, the Iruma ASDF Festival in November 1998, for instance, featured a Miss Air Force Contest in which women in the vicinity of ASDF bases were encouraged to compete. The participants were civilian women who were driven to a stage by male uniformed service members and interviewed by a female officer. Lined up on the stage in the center of the stage, they were flanked by an equally formally arranged group of senior military personnel and representatives of a number of companies who presented them with gifts at the end of the ceremony. At the annual parade at the GSDF Asaka base in November 1998, then-prime minister Obuchi Keizō spoke publicly about the necessity of tough training for the Self-Defense Forces in the light of the North Korean missile incident. At the NDA Open Door Festival (Bōei Daigakkō Kaikō Kinensai 46) on 15 November 1998, cadets staged a wide array of presentations and performances ranging from an attack exercise simulation on the NDA's training ground to a judo competition, a flower arrangement exhibition, and a taikō concert. At the Matsushima ASDF Festival in July 1999, visitors could have their photograph taken with a female model and the Blue Impulse Team arranged in the background. The Fuji School 49th Anniversary Festival on 20 July 2003 offered to anybody who was interested a ride on a tank in a Self-Defense Forces helmet and uniform jacket. Thousands of people lined up for that experience.

In contrast to posters for the wider public and the cartoons for the young, these events do not merely represent and narrate the meaning, capability and character of the Self-Defense Forces; they also create certain experiences for the audience and thus follow a specific choreography that reveals in yet another way how the military positions itself within a society whose security it is supposed to assure. The core elements of most of these events and specifically open house days on bases are modeled on the live firing demonstration that is held annually at the foot of Mt. Fuji at one of the largest firing

ranges on the main island Honshu. It was first organized in 1961 primarily in order to introduce the latest weaponry and tactics to officer candidates. In 1966 it was first held publicly as an attempt to "deepen the understanding and knowledge of the Self-Defense Forces in the Japanese population." Today it constitutes the culmination of a week of demonstrations aimed specifically at military personnel such as NDA cadets and service members who attend military courses. The last two demonstrations, which are held on a weekend in September, appeal to a variety of other audiences and are the most elaborate, expensive, and biggest of these events. Encapsulating the main characteristics of the most aggressive and bluntly militaristic of all public relations efforts, it has varied slightly each year. It offers yet another microperspective onto the larger public relations scheme of the Self-Defense Forces. It reinforces messages projected in other public relations efforts while also offering sharply contradicting ones about the military potential, technological sophistication, and violent capabilities of the Self-Defense Forces.

Each year over 50,000 people witness the event during a single weekend. It is important to note that the audience of the live firing demonstration and similar events do not form one homogeneous, anonymous body, nor is it as randomly composed as the passers-by at a billboard who might see a public relations poster. The live firing demonstration draws a specific audience that is decisively sympathetic toward the demonstration and display of a conventional militarism in the form of a series of combat simulations. The majority of visitors are older and middle-aged men, some of whom wear a piece of clothing or a cap that indicates their appreciation of the Self-Defense Forces. Yet others have their small children and grandchildren in tow, some of whom are dressed up in military camouflage gear from head to toe. To receive a ticket, one has to provide one's name, address, phone number, and one's profession. Although in general anyone who provides these data receives a ticket if the application form is filled out early enough, in actuality one does not attend anonymously. Attendance presupposes an act of commitment that enables the military authorities to check one's identity, perhaps for security reasons or to identify potential recruits.

Given the size of the crowd and the mass of service members and weapons appearing in the demonstration, the whole operation is logistically complex as dozens of combat helicopters, transport helicopters, tanks, missiles, and other state of the art weaponry are put to performative use. Tensions among the participating service members and the audience run high given that this is the Self-Defense Forces, which count themselves among Asia's technologically most advanced military establishments. Besides, the event takes place in a country whose population denies that the Self-Defense Forces is a military organization. On the two days I attended in 1998, an area measuring hundreds of square yards in front of the stands for important guests and benches and mats for ordinary audience members formed the maneuver area, which served as a stage for the demonstration. Off in the distant hills a few miles away were the targets. A military band playing military march music was stationed between the mats and the stage. Behind the stands were a number of vendors' booths arranged at which drinks, snacks and souvenirs were available. There, visitors bought shoes, belts, and lighters emblazoned with the various unit emblems of the Self-Defense Forces, tie clips, Prince Pickles and Parsley dolls in various sizes, and telephone cards with pictures of weapons and vehicles which visitors take home as evidence of participation in the live firing demonstration – another way by which the Self-Defense Forces are domesticated. Yet other booths offered videotapes of weapons or military vehicles, small plastic models of tanks and planes, or jackets with "U.S. Air Force" stitched on them. A single

national flag flew above the control tent located to the side of the stands. Until the demonstration began at half past ten, a woman spoke on the public address system and explained the kinds of vehicles that would appear, the targets that would be shot at, and the weapons that would be used during the demonstration. At exactly half past ten a male announcer took over. He announced that the demonstration was based on the cooperation of the GSDF and ASDF and that its aim was "to deepen the understanding of the Self-Defense Forces." He too went through the kinds of drills, equipment and armaments that were soon to appear, and it was his voice that would later be heard shouting the commands for the performing soldiers. The gendered order of the announcements remained intact throughout the demonstration: no other female voice was heard until it was over and the visitors were ushered back to their means of transport and wished a safe trip home; and not a single female service member visibly participated in the live firing demonstration. In contrast to other representations of the Self-Defense Forces, as a simplified combat show, the Self-Defense Forces demonstration seemed to reconstruct an obsolete world of the military and combat as a preserve of men.

The demonstration began with the appearance of two yellow and green smoke grenades being set off on hills opposite the stands in order to define the boundaries within which the Self-Defense Forces are allowed to fire live ammunition. The first performance was by the ASDF. Two bombing runs – one of explosive bombs, the other of fire-bombs – were carried out by Phantom jets, closely followed by a number of helicopters swooshing down across the maneuver area. These runs excited individual members of the crowd, but most watched silently and some held their ears to shut out the deafening sound of the explosions. From this point onwards, the public address system repeatedly patched the audience in to what appeared to be the communications network, so that it seemed as if the audience heard the actual orders of the commanders.

This first part of the live firing demonstration is what Don Handelman (1998:xxix) calls events of presentation, mirrors held up to social order, reflecting and expressing what their composers desire for society and in which the form, fantasy, and power of these events derive directly from social order. Local or regional civilian events are one example of these kinds of events, but the more significant instances are state-mandated occasions such as military parades. In this respect as well, the live firing demonstration is a variant of the annual parade the GSDF holds at the Asaka base, or of the similar if smaller scale performances at the NDA and on bases during open house days all over Japan. The marching and performing troops as well as the authorities that review the parade incarnate the order of the state (Azaryahu 1999; Da Matta 1984:219). In the case of Japan, politicians, senior bureaucrats and other members of the national and local governments, and commanders of the three military services personify the state. These individuals play a double role as both audience and performers; they are there to simultaneously watch the demonstration and be on view.

For the rest of the audience, however, and for most of the demonstration, there is a strict divide between those who are qualified to be inside the order and the rigid hierarchy of the event and those who are outside of it (Da Matta 1984:218-9). This separation between the soldiers, the authorities, and general audience was most evident during the first part of the live firing demonstration. The regular, undifferentiated audience sat separated by ropes to talk, admire, and witness the order presented to them. Hence the separation is established not only for practical reasons; it also carries messages about the loci of power and authority.

The live firing demonstration also contradicts messages purveyed through other public

relations strategies and materials which I have introduced above. Its messages are far from one-dimensional and clear-cut. The most explicit message of the live firing demonstration is the one announced over the loudspeakers at the beginning of the event: the intent "to deepen the understanding of the Self-Defense Forces." In contrast to public relations posters, which symbolically disarm the Self-Defense Forces when addressing a wide anonymous, undefined audience, or cartoons, which fictionalize and trivialize the military, this expressed purpose is not just an empty phrase invented by some public relations expert. Announcers guide the crowd's understanding of the live firing demonstration by providing an interpretive framework for what happens in the performance and for the general characteristics of the Self-Defense Forces. They furnish what seems to be rather uncomplicated data and information. For example, there are myriad explanations about specific weapons or vehicles including weight, power, range, and the place of production. This information forms part of a celebration of military technology which is associated with having the latest and most advanced equipment. Hence, the Self-Defense Forces associate themselves with other technologically advanced armed forces, for which the ability to produce speed and power emerges as the primary factor for fighting a war and technological sophistication seems to increasingly replace brute force as the key to victory (Virilio 2002[1991], Moskos, Williams and Segal 2000:11–2).

While some of my analysis also applies to the annual GSDF parade on the Asaka base or to anniversary events on GSDF bases all over Japan, the live firing demonstration involves moments of spectacle that set it apart from such processions. The enactment of the combat scenarios during the demonstration reveals what remains carefully camouflaged in the public relations material I have examined in the first two sections of this essay. The show of fire power, which is the central element of the demonstration but entirely absent from material for consumption by wider society, takes on the character of spectacle, a dynamic social form that demands movement, action, and change on the part of the human actors at center stage, and excitement, thrill and pleasure on the part of the spectators (MacAloon 1984b:244). Almost all of the presentations are accompanied by pyrotechnics that, like fireworks, combine lights and colors, sounds, smells, and even touch. The variety of colors as in the smoke bombs, black gas fumes, and the intense hues of the missiles are made all the more impressive against the background of the rather subdued browns and greens of the "stage," the soldiers' uniforms, and the camouflage of the vehicles. The variety of sounds and reverberations heard during the exercise further amplify the impression of the event: the machines' motors and airplane engines, the shouting of orders by commanders in the "patch-in" to the communications net, and most notably the sound of the firing of different kinds of weapons, including rifles, machine guns, cannons, air-plane bombs, and missiles. The smell of the sulfur from the implements fired or the oil burned by the heavy machinery drifting back to the crowd adds a perceptible olfactory dimension to the demonstration. The palpable vibrations of the armored vehicles that drive near the crowd as the effects of the explosive discharges enhance the physical dimension of the demonstration while firing at non-human targets adds an element of play and thus non-seriousness in and around the performance of combat assignments. Similar to the antiquated armor of the military attacking Prince Pickles in the cartoon, this too contributes to the trivialization of the potential for violence.

Unlike the playful characterization of a military conflict in cartoons, however, the demonstration has no uncertain outcome. There is very little space for improvisation or individual creativity. Rather, the event is tightly scripted and thus the emphasis shifts to its more dramatic aspects. Hence, the live firing demonstration also

involves the spectacularization of violence through the combination of fire, colors, noise, smell and movement. It is this spectacularization that turns actions related to soldiering into entertaining displays.

Figure 4: Some visitors are eager to familiarize themselves and their children with the tanks and other military equipment that had been used during the live firing demonstration. Being photographed in the vicinity or on top of the tanks adds excitement and creates an opportunity to review the images at home.

The live firing demonstration allows the Self-Defense Forces to address certain issues, to redress and rectify some of the problems that are embedded in its ambiguous existence in Japanese society, to remind politicians that they are a resource that can be used in times of emergency, and to plead for support in political arenas normally closed to uniformed representatives of the Self-Defense Forces. Similarly, the presence of foreign commanders and officers may be viewed as the recognition that the Self-Defense Forces draw from other professionals for their capabilities in military expertise and performance.

The live firing demonstration most explicitly demonstrates the war-making potential of the Self-Defense Forces. In contrast to more civilian messages that the Self-Defense Forces purvey in posters, cartoons, and at other occasions of self-presentation, the live firing demonstration centers on the armed forces' potential for the operation of violence and constitutes what Michael Mann (1987) has called "mass-spectator militarism," or a fascination with all things military. The combination of picnic, festival and open house days that marks the last part of the day complements these processes. Here tactile experiences, shared food and drink, and the controlled breakdown of the boundaries between the audience and the performers work to domesticate and personalize the event. The troops and the weapons become objects that are both accessible and open to dialogue with invitees. There is fun in, but – in contrast to comics and animated films produced by the JDA – not fun made of, the live firing demonstration, and the format does not invite the audience to ask questions. Finally, in contrast to other public relations efforts, it contradicts the image of service members represented in the recruitment posters, comics and other public relations material as well as the service members' image as participants in peacekeeping, humanitarian aid or rescue missions, and instead stresses the conventional, "modernist" (Moskos, Williams and Segal 2000:11) scenario of combat.

Concluding Remarks

The Self-Defense Forces public relations apparatus orchestrates these three sets of public relations efforts – recruitment posters for the wide, anonymous public, cartoons for children and youth, and live firing demonstrations for service members and sympathizers – to appeal to different segments of the Japanese population. It projects a series of civilianizing, familiarizing, trivializing and spectacularizing messages about the military's capabilities, roles, and character. Some of them are mutually reinforcing whereas others are radically contradicting one another. None of these messages are more true than another: Combat simulations might look like actual combat to the unaccustomed but nobody dies. Some public relations materials trivialize

the military but several cohorts have pursued whole careers by doing exactly what recruitment posters and cartoons promise, namely by gaining promotion on the basis of a variety of successful activities other than combat. Live firing demonstrations and similar events center on a function of the military that generally has been regarded as its core function, the exercise of violence. Yet no Japanese service member's actions for the Self-Defense Forces has been acknowledged as an exercise of violence in the name of the state even though they might have come very close during their deployment to Iraq as well as in support of the U.S. military in Afghanistan and Iraq. Some observers tacitly assume that the training for and prospect of combat is what really holds the military together. Yet, during the past two years of deployment to Iraq – the closest Japanese soldiers have ever come to war – recruitment rates have decreased, the number of suicides have soared, and returnees from Iraq have expressed primarily relief that everybody survived the mission unharmed. Hence, it is important to note that the Self-Defense Forces public relations efforts do not primarily cover up some "hidden," "real" character of the military that is assumed to be its potential for violence. Rather, at a time of an ever-shrinking population of potential recruits, the Self-Defense Forces need to play all sides. They cannot hold on to the notion that combat is the core role of the military. It cannot exclusively summon its troops under the dictum of national defense: because defense has not been necessary during the last fifty years and because the "nation" has become a "zero sign, an empty container into which diverse audiences can insert their varied fantasies, but without having much substance" (Gerow 2006). It is uneasy about its identity, an identity that is decidedly postmodern in nature – broken, bracketed, multiple. Thus it appears that the military needs to symbolically arm and disarm itself for public consumption in order to convince the fearful that they are protected and the peaceful that they need not feel threatened.

The close ties to the U.S. military and to U.S. security interests further complicate the Self-Defense Forces' task of meaningfully situating themselves within Japan's political landscape and vis à vis a population whose appreciation it seeks. The public relations efforts I have described here carefully manage public representations of these ties, causing pride in some instances, but also uneasiness. The Self-Defense Forces public relations apparatus almost completely suppresses references to the U.S. military in posters, humorously addresses them in popular cultural expressions, invites representatives of the U.S. and other foreign military establishments to live firing demonstrations, and prints glossy images in public relations brochures of Japanese service members working side by side with U.S. troops during combined exercises. It is important to note, however, that in photographs of the Self-Defense Forces' deployment to Iraq U.S. troops are entirely absent, perhaps in a self-conscious effort to contradict the demonstrative alignment of the Koizumi with the Bush administration at the onset of the war.

As with all advertising and public relations efforts, the big question is whether these efforts work. JDA officials think so. Citing recent opinion polls about the increasing acceptance of the Self-Defense Forces and referring to (the occasional) recruit with a degree from one of Japan's most prestigious universities, public relations officers claim that their efforts are fruitful. Military historian Yoshida Yutaka (2002:7) has sketched the conventional view of military-societal relations in Japan in postwar Japan as follows: Subsequent to the defeat of the empire in 1945, the Japanese population has hated the war and – by affiliation – the military. According to one of the first opinion polls about the armed forces that was conducted in 1956, 42 percent of respondents agreed when asked whether the imperial armed forces had succeeded in training "proper people" (shikkari shita ningen); while 37 percent disagreed.

Concerning trust in the capabilities of the postwar military, public opinion was most negative in the 1970s. According to an international opinion poll conducted in 1970 of 6000 youth on sex, war and patriotism, among other issues, only 10 percent of youth from Tokyo agreed with 65 to 88 percent of young people in Manila, Saigon, Cairo and Calcutta that having the biggest military possible was desirable. 20 percent of youth polled in Tokyo agreed, with 56 percent of youth in Frankfurt, that it would be best not to have a military at all; and 70 percent of youth from Tokyo agreed with 65 percent of young Romans that keeping the military as small as possible was ideal (Shūkan Asahi 1970). In short, only German youth of the 1970s were more apprehensive of the military than their Japanese peers.

Based on recent polls and my conversations with younger service members, it seems that today the public relations efforts work in at least one way, namely to provide new recruits with motivational narratives. By and large, service members across cohorts and gender note the lack of socioeconomic means that has prevented them from pursuing some other career path or the entry into a regular university as well as their initial lack of the understanding of and interest in matters of national defense. Beyond that, however, their narratives are closely tied to the messages of the public relations activities I have examined above: gender equality, the desire to prove oneself, participation in disaster relief and peacekeeping, the wish to help people, and so on.

In addition, the fact that a major pop music group, the all-female Morning Musume, agreed to a promotion job for the Self-Defense Forces might also be viewed as an indicator that popular culture has been coming around to take over some of the burden of promoting the (soft and fuzzy) military. New films that feature the Self-Defense Forces now mirror some of the images of the Self-Defense Forces that were generated by their public relations apparatus: Films ranging from Silent Service (Chinmoku no kantai), Aegis (Bokoku no iijisu), and Samurai Commando: Mission 1549 (Sengoku Jieitai 1549), among others, give voice to many of the basic tenets of the Japanese right, the most central of which is that the warped history of the postwar has robbed Japan of its standing as a true nation (Gerow 2006). However, they also take great pains to create an inoffensive vision of war and the nation, especially by advocating life over death. They tread the delicate line between viewing war as unnecessarily ending young lives, and construct certain battles as narratively acceptable. Rather than the nation, crews are protecting things closer at hand such as the family, loved ones, hometowns. And they refrain from using direct symbols of the nation such as the flag or the emperor, thus following to a considerable degree the rules laid out in the products of the Self-Defense Forces' public relations efforts. The trend of an increasingly intimate relationship between the Self-Defense Forces and popular culture certainly constitutes a form of militarization, but it is a militarization that already has internalized the multi-faceted character of the military that must be capable of caring, rescuing and building, in addition to the much more remote possibility of fighting a war. Likewise, as Aaron Gerow (2006) has noted, recent popular cultural production in Japan has reflected the nationalist turn in politics. But the nationalism in these works is warped and tortured, and confronted with a myriad of obstacles that force it to take convoluted paths, thus reminding us what nationalism has to erase in order to appear compelling and unproblematic.

This is a modified and abbreviated version of chapter 4 of my book, Uneasy Warriors: Gender, Memory and Popular Culture in the Japanese Army (University of California Press, 2007), published in Japanese translation as Fuan na heishitachi (Hara shobō, 2008).

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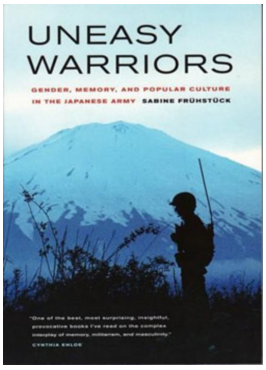

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