

Section 2 Background to the New National Defense Program Guidelines

1 Process for Reviewing the National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2011 and Beyond

1 Reviews within the Ministry of Defense (Defense Posture Review Board)

Given the requirement stated in the “On the Defense Program for FY2013” (approved by the Cabinet on January 25, 2013) to revise the National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2011 and Beyond (2010 NDPG) and reach a conclusion before the end of 2013, the MOD established the Defense Posture Review Board in January 2013 chaired by the Parliamentary Senior Vice-Minister of Defense. The Board convened on 25 occasions, during which time it deliberated on international affairs and the role of defense capabilities, among other topics. On July 26, 2013, the Board made an interim report to the Defense Council with regards to the direction of its reviews and points of discussion.

The interim report pointed out that the security environment surrounding Japan has grown more serious since the 2010 NDPG, due to various security challenges and destabilizing factors that are emerging and becoming more tangible and acute. Additionally, it noted that domestically Japan once again recognized the importance of preparedness for large-scale disasters and other emergencies.

The Board derived the functions and capabilities to be emphasized for a defense program for the building up of more effective defense capabilities by carrying out an assessment of capabilities based on joint operations. The interim report, pursuant to this assessment of capabilities, indicated the following eight areas of focus: (1) reinforcement of information, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities; (2) response to attacks on remote islands; (3) response to ballistic missile attacks and guerilla/special forces; (4) response to cyber attacks; (5) response to major disasters and other emergencies; (6) reinforcement of joint operations; (7) strengthening of intelligence capabilities; and (8) promotion of the utilization of outer space.

2 Council on Security and Defense Capabilities and Reviews within the National Security Council

The new NDPG were closely examined together with the National Security Strategy by the aforementioned Council on Security and Defense Capabilities. In addition, the new NDPG was deliberated on by the National Security Council, which was established on December 4, 2013.

Finally, on December 17, 2013, the NDPG was approved by the National Security Council and the Cabinet.

2 A New Security Environment

1 The Global Security Environment

As interdependence among countries expands and deepens, there is a growing risk that unrest in the global security environment or a security problem in a single country or region could immediately develop into a security challenge or destabilizing factor for the entire international community. The multi-polarization of the world continues as a result of shifts in the balance of power due to the further development of countries such as China and India and the relative change of influence of the United States (U.S.). At the same time, the U.S. is expected to continue to play the role in maintaining world peace and stability.

There is an increase in the number of so-called “gray-zone” situations, that is, neither pure peacetime nor contingencies over territory, sovereignty and maritime economic interests.

In the maritime domain, there have been cases of undue infringement upon freedom of the high seas due to piracy acts as well as coastal states unilaterally asserting their rights and taking actions. In addition, securing the stable use of outer space and cyberspace is becoming a significant security challenge for the international community against the backdrop of rapid technology innovation.

2 The Security Environment in the Asia-Pacific Region

Countries are enhancing and strengthening their cooperative relationships to resolve security challenges. In the meantime, gray-zone situations tend to linger, raising concerns that they may develop into more serious situations.

North Korea has repeatedly taken actions that heighten tension in the region, which constitutes a serious destabilizing factor to the security not only of Japan but of the entire region and the international community. In particular, North Korea’s nuclear and missile development, coupled with its provocative rhetoric and behavior, such as suggesting a missile attack on Japan, pose a serious and imminent threat to Japan’s security.

As for China, while it is greatly expected to play an active role in a more cooperative manner in the region and the world, it has been continuously increasing its defense expenditures and has been rapidly reinforcing its military in a wide range of areas without sufficient transparency. In

addition, China is rapidly expanding and intensifying its activities in the maritime and aerial domains. In particular, China has taken assertive actions with regard to issues of conflicts of interest in the maritime domain, as exemplified by its attempts to change the status quo by coercion. As Japan has great concern about these Chinese activities, it will need to continue to pay utmost attention to them. Such trends in China has also caused security concerns for the Asia-Pacific region and the international community.

As for Russia, it is observed that the country is proceeding to reform and modernize its military forces. The activities of Russian armed forces have been active.

The U.S. has clearly manifested its decision on the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, and is maintaining and strengthening its engagement and presence in the region despite fiscal and various other constraints while enhancing its relationships with its allies, among other efforts.

See ▶ Fig. II-4-2-1 (Recent Security Related Issues around Japan)

3 Japan's Geographical Characteristics

For the maritime state of Japan, securing the safety of maritime and air traffic through strengthening an “Open and Stable Seas” order constitutes the basis of peace and prosperity. Japan also faces security vulnerabilities resulting from frequent natural disasters and other factors. In the event of another massive earthquake like the Great East Japan Earthquake, its impact may spread to the international community. The possibility of future huge earthquakes such as a Nankai Trough earthquake makes it increasingly necessary to take every possible measure to prepare for such disasters.

4 Issues to be Tackled by Japan

In light of the above, while the probability of a large-scale military conflict between major countries, which was a concern during the Cold War era, presumably remains low, various security challenges and destabilizing factors are emerging and becoming more tangible and acute. As a result, the security environment surrounding Japan has become increasingly severe since the formulation of 2010 NDPG. As the security challenges and destabilizing factors are diverse and wide-ranging, it is difficult for a single country to deal with them on its own. Therefore, it is increasingly necessary that countries which share interests in responding to shared security challenges, among others, cooperate and actively respond to maintain regional and global stability.