

The Current State of Strategic Communications and Measures to be Taken by Ministry of Defense and Self- Defense Forces

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Introduction

On August 29, 2018, the Prime Minister of Japan held the first meeting of the Advisory Panel on Security and Defense Capabilities¹, intended to contribute to a large-scale review of defense planning. In this meeting, a member of the panel expressed the view that “There is a need for Japan, as a nation, to make strategic efforts to interconnect and integrate available means, from the statements of key Government officials to diplomatic negotiations and equipment and operation of the Self-Defense Forces, based on identification of the state of strategic communications as a core concept of national security.”² Following discussions in seven subsequent meetings, in December of that year a Cabinet Decision was made on the National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2019 and Beyond (“new Defense Guidelines” hereinafter). These new Defense Guidelines included the statements, “Japan will *further advance* everyday efforts such as *strategic*

communications by systematically combining all available policy tools, ” and “SDF will enhance its presence on a regular basis by actively engaging in, among others, joint training and exercises and overseas port visits, thereby demonstrating Japan’s will and capability. SDF will, *in close integration with diplomacy, promote strategic communications* including aforementioned activities by SDF units”³ (*author’s emphasis*). As far as the author could tell from his own research, these new Defense Guidelines appear to be the first official Japanese government security documents to use the term “strategic communications” (“SC” hereinafter). This shows that the government recognizes SC initiatives as an important topic and has expressed a clear intent to implement them thoroughly.

However, it faces two major barriers in doing so. These concern the issue that it is not necessarily clear just what is meant by SC, what kinds of policies are referred to by SC policies, and why they are necessary to the Japanese government as well as the Ministry of Defense and the Self-Defense Forces, or what kinds of measures should be taken, and how, for these purposes. Unfortunately, perusal of the new Defense Guidelines from start to finish does not provide answers to these questions. At the risk of getting ahead of the discussion in this paper, SC is a comparatively new policy concept on the importance of which the United States and other nations have focused since around the year 2000, adopting practical policies for its achievement and further developing the concept through a process of trial and error in such practice. For this reason, in Japan the term SC cannot be said to have yet achieved social acceptance, and even if SC initiatives are said to be becoming advanced, it would seem to be the case that most practitioners in the Japanese government and the Ministry of

Defense honestly are unsure of what kinds of measures are referred to by SC and how they should start putting them into practice. Accordingly, an understanding of the policy concept of SC is an important necessary precondition for the government to implement SC initiatives, and discussion of practical SC initiatives must be based on such an understanding.

Based on this awareness of the issues, this paper is intended to take an overview of the concept of SC as understood in Western nations, and then analyze the current state of SC in Japan and make clear the policies that should be taken in the future. For this purpose, first, in Section 1, we will elucidate the definition of SC as used in this paper, referring to the definitions of the U.S. and other nations as seen in previous studies. Then, after ascertaining roughly when the concept of SC first appeared and what are the principles of SC in the U.S. and other nations, we will review the conditions for SC implementation. Next, in Section 2, we will conduct an external analysis of the SC initiatives that Japan and the Self-Defense Forces appear to have implemented through now. Specifically, we will conduct this analysis using the SC conditions identified in Section 1, looking at the two cases of the efforts being promoted by the Japanese government related to “realizing the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific” and efforts related to Japan’s security. Lastly, in Section 3, we will consider the implications for Japan, including the policies that the nation should implement, based on our discussion through that point.

It should be noted that this paper presents the author’s personal views based on academic study and does not represent the views of the Government of Japan or the Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Forces.

1. The concept of strategic communications (SC)

This section will start with an attempt to define SC for the purposes of this paper, referring to definitions proposed by the U.S. and British governments, NATO, and researchers, in order to understand the concept of SC and to make its definition as used in this paper clear. Then, it will take an overview of the backgrounds of SC policies in the U.S. and Britain, two nations that have comparatively long SC histories, and identify conditions for implementation of SC referring to the principles of SC in the U.S., Britain, and NATO.

(1) The definition of SC

Joseph Samuel Nye defined soft power as the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants, arguing that the three sources of soft power were culture, political values, and diplomacy⁴. Defining smart power as a strategy for success through the combination of hard power in the form of military force and monetary payments, and soft power in the form of persuasion and appeal, he stressed the importance of smart power in the 21st century⁵. Paul Cornish, et al. stressed the importance of SC, arguing that soft power was central to the achievement of national strategic objectives based on an understanding of the limits of military force as hard power⁶. However, despite this understanding of the importance of soft power and SC, understanding of just what is referred to by the term SC is not necessarily consistent. Christopher Paul, while also mentioning subjects such as the difficulty of defining SC and the ambiguity of the boundaries of SC⁷, points out that these differences in understanding and recognition of SC make it difficult to achieve a shared understanding, to

identify problems, and to derive solutions to them⁸.

In this section, keeping in mind this difficulty of understanding SC, we will both ascertain an overview of the concept of SC, referring to the definitions of the U.S. and other foreign governments that have taken the lead in implementing SC policies, and to those of researchers, and furthermore decide on a definition of SC as used in this paper, based on the individual details.

To begin with, the definitions of the U.S., Britain, NATO, and leading researchers (Paul Cornish, et al., Christopher Paul) are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Definitions of SC by the U.S. government, other institutions, and researchers

| country and organization | | Definition |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| U.S. | White House | The synchronization of words and deeds and how they will be perceived by selected audiences, as well as programs and activities deliberately aimed at communicating and engaging with intended audiences, including those implemented by public affairs, public diplomacy, and information operations professionals. ⁹ |
| | Department of Defense | Focused United States Government efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power ¹⁰ |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| British Ministry of Defence | The systematic and co-ordinated use of all means of communication to deliver U.K. national security objectives by influencing the attitudes and behaviours of individuals, groups and states ¹¹ |
| NATO | The coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities—Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs, Military Public Affairs, Information Operations and Psychological Operations, as appropriate—in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO’s aims ¹² |
| Paul Cornish, et al. | A systematic series of sustained and coherent activities, conducted across strategic, operational and tactical levels, that enables understanding of target audiences and identifies effective conduits to promote and sustain particular types of behavior ¹³ |
| Christopher Paul | Coordinated actions, messages, images, and other forms of signaling or engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives ¹⁴ |

As this table shows, definitions of SC vary widely by the organization and its level, by the way objectives and means are viewed, by policy positioning and the scope of activities handled as SC, by the author’s understanding, and by other factors.

Next, we will analyze the specific content of each definition qualitatively. First, the White House’s definition of SC is expressed using three points: (i) synchronization of words and deeds, (ii) whether these are understood by intended audiences, and (iii) plans and activities intended to communicate and engage with intended audiences. A distinguishing feature of this definition is the way it includes in SC not only (i) synchronization of words and deeds, but also evaluation of how these are understood by

audiences (ii) and the process of implementing (i) and (ii) (iii). On the other hand, while it does explicitly identify an objective of SC activities in the form of “deliberate efforts to communicate and engage with intended audiences, ” it does not appear to describe the policy objectives and goals of SC itself.

Next, let's look at the definition by the U.S. Department of Defense. This definition differs from that by the White House in that it identifies a clear positioning of SC itself as seen by the Department of Defense: “to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives. ” In addition, it describes SC using the expression “focused United States Government efforts to understand and engage key audiences” and encompasses the process of government activities “through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power. ” This can be interpreted as a rephrasing of part (iii) of the White House’s definition. However, the phrase “United States Government efforts” is highly abstract, and it is difficult to consider this to be an appropriate expression since what is referred to by “efforts” is left highly ambiguous.

What about the British Ministry of Defence’s definition of SC? Britain identifies the policy objectives of SC as “to deliver U.K. national security objectives by influencing the attitudes and behaviours of individuals, groups and states, ” seeing SC as the “systematic and co-ordinated use of all means of communication” to achieve these. The terms “to communicate and engage with intended audiences” and “to understand and engage key audiences” in the U.S. definitions have the same general meaning as

“influencing the attitudes and behaviours of individuals, groups and states” in the British definition, although the British definition describes these in more specific terms.

The NATO definition sees the policy objectives of SC as being “in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO’s aims,” identifying as SC “the coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities—Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs, Military Public Affairs, Information Operations and Psychological Operations, as appropriate” in support of these. A look at this definition shows that in spite of some minor differences in wording, essentially it conforms to the British definition overall in terms of its policy objectives, the structure of SC acts themselves, and their content.

A look at the definitions of leading researchers Paul Cornish, et al. and Christopher Paul shows that they are similar to those of the U.S. and Britain in that they both aim to influence the other parties to act in specific directions, through “promot(ing) particular types of behavior” or “inform(ing), influenc(ing), or persuad(ing) selected audiences.” They also see SC as “a systematic series of sustained and coherent activities, conducted across strategic, operational and tactical levels” or “coordinated actions, messages, images, and other forms of signaling or engagement”—expressions that are consistent with those of the U.S. and British definitions in that they refer to a consistent series of activities or behavior. Furthermore, Christopher Paul identifies “support of national objectives” as a policy objective of SC, a concept shared with the definitions of Britain, NATO, and the U.S. Department of Defense.

Since methods of implementing SC essentially will vary due to

differences in countries' national interests, in their policy objectives, and in the means available for them to use, it can be considered natural in a sense that there would be no universal definition of SC. But it is interesting that, despite this, there are no apparent large-scale qualitative differences. As far as the author has been able to find, SC has not necessarily been defined clearly in Japan. This absence of a definition both could lead to problems in practice and could mean that this paper would be unpersuasive if it were to proceed in the absence of a clear definition. Accordingly, the author will attempt to decide on his own definition in order to clarify the definition of SC in Japan.

Based on the results of analysis conducted through this point, the key points of SC can be summarized in the three categories of (i) SC policy objectives, (ii) means of achieving SC policy objectives, and (iii) specific methods for enabling these means. That is, it would be appropriate to think of SC policy objectives as supporting the national interest, national objectives and policies, and, more specifically, national security objectives and policies. Next, the means of achieving policy objectives can be considered to refer to impacting the target audience and inducing it to engage in behavior toward a certain direction. Lastly, it would be appropriate to consider methods of enabling these means to refer to activities and behavior to coordinate related organizations and achieve synchronized government communication. This can be considered to include the communication of verbal messages such as government statements and messages made through actions by the government, including the Self-Defense Forces and the Japan Coast Guard. Based on the above thinking, we can define SC as follows:

SC refers to; the external government communication of information and government dissemination of information and government actions to support the realization of national security policies through impacting the perception of the target audience and inducing it to engage in behavior toward a certain direction.

Beginning in Section 2, this paper will use this definition in discussing Japan's SC initiatives.

(2) The origins of SC and its development

A. The United States

According to a survey by the Institute for Dynamic Educational Advancement (IDEA)¹⁵, a U.S. nonprofit organization that promotes language, science, and cultural literacy, the term SC came into general use in U.S. society, through books, websites, and other media, during the 1990s, and its use increased rapidly during the 2000s¹⁶.

The origins of SC within the U.S. government are considered to be Presidential Decision Directive 68 on the reorganization and strengthening of U.S. international public information efforts, issued April 30, 1999¹⁷, and the U.S. Department of Defense "Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on the Creation and Dissemination of All Forms of Information in Support of Psychological Operations (PSYOP) in Time of Military Conflict,"¹⁸ issued in May 2000¹⁹. Tetsuya Yano describes the subsequent development of SC as follows: U.S. SC policies fully became a main subject of attention following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks²⁰.

Following the U.S. government's action in Afghanistan spurred by the terrorist attacks and the subsequent Iraq War, in 2004 the Defense Science Board led a process of public-private and interagency research to advocate the force strengthening policies that the U.S. military would need in the future²¹. As a part of these activities, a subcommittee was established on the theme of SC, which reported its findings in December of that year²². Among other points, this report stated that since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks U.S. governmental, diplomatic, and military leaders had discerned that antiterror strategies could not be implemented fully without effective and coordinated SC, that SC was vital to U.S. national security and diplomatic policies, and that SC must be reformed²³. In addition, it advised the government to strengthen its structure (posture) concerning SC, through means including the establishment of the new post of Assistant to the President for National Security in charge of SC, the creation of an SC committee inside the National Security Council (NSC), clarification of the role of the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs as leading instruction of and planning by government agencies regarding SC, and equipping the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Joint Chiefs of Staff with SC elements for planning and strategy throughout the armed forces²⁴. Even after that, in 2007 the DSB carried out further research on SC reforms to respond to new strategic environments, the findings of which it announced in January of the following year²⁵. Thus, spurred by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the U.S. came to recognize SC as an important policy tool vital to diplomatic and security policies, and since then it has strived to strengthen the government's SC-related structure.

Yano further argues that it was the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) that formally incorporated SC as a part of defense policy²⁶. Identifying SC as a part of Department of Defense initiatives along with others such as strengthening the tactics of government agencies, the QDR report clearly stated, “Victory in the long war ultimately depends on strategic communication by the United States and its international partners.”²⁷ This appears to be related to the lessons of the Afghanistan action referred to above. Specifically, it describes how the death of local residents caused by a mistaken early detonation of an improvised explosive device (IED) by a terrorist organization was falsely portrayed by the terrorists to the media as being due to a U.S. Predator attack, and this incorrect information quickly spread around the world, greatly harming the strategic environment in which the U.S. military was operating.²⁸ Learning from this lesson, the U.S. military pointed out the importance of the “narrative battle.” Concluding that the speed at which the importance came to be recognized of the battle of information and narrative in terms of achieving objectives at all levels as being slow at the leadership level in particular, it argues that control of information and communication is vital.²⁹

In this way, the U.S. government came to recognize the importance of SC and address it as an important policy issue government-wide in the process of carrying out its anti-insurgency strategy in the War On Terror that began in 2001 in Afghanistan and the subsequent Iraq War, and this led to efforts to flesh out the concept in more concrete form in the Department of Defense and other government organizations.

Amid this flow of developments, under Article 1055 of the fiscal 2009

Defense Authorization Act, the U.S. Department of Defense and the White House each submitted reports to Congress on SC, in December 2009 and March 2010, respectively.³⁰ Each of these reports first discussed the definition of SC, which has not necessarily been made clear through that point. As seen in the wording of the White House report to the effect that despite increasing use of the term SC over the past few years its misuse had led to considerable confusion,³¹ it appears that the report was prepared to redefine the concept of SC in the U.S. government. Under this point of view, in addition to reviewing the concept, the White House report also clarified SC roles in government organizations. For example, it described responsibility for synchronization of words and deeds as something that traditionally had belonged to the communications community (centered on public information sections) but, in light of the presence of abilities and activities that should be synchronized and in order to communicate messages on all U.S. government activities, such synchronization would be the joint responsibility of agency-level leaders.³² Furthermore, it also calls for strategic planning at a governmental level and promotion of cooperation among agencies at a national level, including the policy committees of related agencies and interagency coordination groups at an operational level, to be led by NSC staff.³³ Thus, by pointing out the importance of synchronization of the words communicated by the U.S. government and its actual behavior, it expanded the scope of the communication community that should be involved in such synchronization. In addition, to further improve coordination among related agencies, it assigned coordination authority to NSC staff.³⁴ It also identified public information diplomacy as a responsibility of the

Department of State and positioned the U.S. Department of Defense as an important player contributing to communication and involvement regarding SC. Through these and other means, it attempted to clarify the division of responsibilities between the State Department and the Department of Defense regarding SC and public information diplomacy, which tended to be unclear³⁵.

In this way, since the 2000s the U.S. appears to have faced various challenges through the implementation of SC, and to solve these challenges it has, since 2009, developed the policy infrastructure essential to SC, throughout means such as definition, expanding the coordination authority of core government personnel (NSC staff), and clarification of the division of responsibilities among related agencies.

In addition, the Strategic Communication Joint Integrating Concept (“SC Concept” hereinafter) issued in October 2009, integrating the reports of the White House and the Department of Defense, was prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a concept at the level of the armed forces.³⁶ This SC Concept summarizes the principles of implementation of SC policies by the U.S. military. Specifically, specifying as its subject period the years 2016 through c. 2028, it identifies an overall framework including strategic planning methods to enable commanders at each level in the U.S. military to achieve the objectives of SC and guidelines for their implementation.³⁷

One highly interesting point is the fact that, in November 2012, the U.S. State Department pointed out the issues of redundancy and ambiguity of roles and functions among existing personnel and organizations implementing SC policies and, to avoid such confusion, decided to employ thenceforth the term communications synchronization (“CS” hereinafter)³⁸

instead of SC³⁹. This change in terminology also can be seen perhaps to be a rewording by the Department of Defense under a Democratic administration of the term SC that had been devalued under the Bush Administration or to be rooted in a tug-of-war between the public information side and the policy side in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. However, in consideration of factors such as the fact that since then the U.S. has ceased to use the term SC and the fact that, frankly speaking, ambiguities remain on the point of what kinds of acts are referred to by SC, it appears most likely that the primary reason for this change was to avoid the confusion caused by the term as it was expressed. Whatever the case, in response to this change in terminology, in December 2013 the U.S. military issued an integrated doctrine notice titled “Commander’s Communication Synchronization,” under which it renewed SC procedures at the military level⁴⁰. This appears to have been an attempt to describe in detail operational procedures at the strategic planning and implementation stage, from the level of strategy to that of battlefield tactics, and to describe relationships to information strategy and other strategy fields, in order to achieve even more thorough management of SC.

In this way, together with the intensification of SC policies based on past lessons and other considerations, the U.S. established doctrines and other systems and developed a structure to enable appropriate implementation of SC policies from the upper through the lower levels of the organization.

B. Great Britain

Britain’s rising interest in SC too was spurred by a failure to create a useful narrative in the Afghanistan action that began in 2001.⁴¹ In Britain,

starting in 2002 members of Parliament issued reports on efforts including adoption of improvements to clarify the roles and responsibilities of related agencies and effectively assess and evaluate the results thereof, in order to build upon public information diplomacy even further. As a result, in April 2006 a public information diplomacy committee was formed with the responsibility of approving communication strategy, advising on resource-allocation decisions, and confirming the assessment and evaluation of results. As a result, the basis was established for a framework for the provision of strategic policies to the main government agencies involved in SC.⁴² In addition, as the Iraq War and the campaign in Afghanistan levelled off to some degree in the latter half of the 2000s, defense diplomacy, which in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review had been considered a responsibility of the British military, came to be stressed in particular as a role of the armed forces other than those of executing military tactics, and the attitude changed toward one of utilizing military assets as tools for expanding British influence.⁴³ This too can be considered a contributor to the development of SC.

In this way, through active debate on SC in the British government during the 2000s, clear rules on SC were established for the first time in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). This review positioned SC as an important aspect of Britain's national security, capable both of transforming attitudes and forms of behavior in line with British national interests and weakening the influence of dangerous individuals, groups, and states.⁴⁴ Then, in March 2011 the first integrated doctrine note on SC was issued by the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) of the British Ministry of Defence, which was revised in January

2012. Positioned as the starting point of military efforts to encourage a stronger understanding of matters such as the value in SC objectives, this integrated doctrine note described, in addition to the definition of SC, its types, and its relationship to the military, matters such as the conditions, principles, and coordination with other agencies and units necessary for implementing SC. It also had aspects of a comprehensive document on SC policies for the entire British government, not just the military.⁴⁵

In this way, in Britain as well, SC has been adopted as a government policy since the first half of the 2000s, and development of SC-related systems has intensified through efforts including building on the SC concept, centered on the Ministry of Defence, and giving concrete form to guidelines on matters such as military use of SC and interorganizational cooperation.

C. Summary

Through this point, we have looked at changes in U.S. and British SC policies. The background of SC in both of these countries shows that the military is expected to play an important role as communicator of messages related to government SC policies, and that the military too has responded appropriately through means such as the development of various systems to fulfill this role. For this reason, tracing the background of military involvement in SC in both the U.S. and Britain serves as important reference information in thinking about the involvement of the Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Forces in SC. Furthermore, this background information also provides two suggestions regarding Japan's promotion of SC policies. First, it will help to understand the meaning of the adoption of

SC policies. The background of the birth of SC policies can be considered to be of utmost importance in thinking about the meaning of their adoption. Second, ascertaining in advance matters such as the lessons and issues in past history and using these as object lessons contributes to the smooth and swift adoption of SC policies. Truly, the history of SC can be said to have value for thinking about the form of Japan's SC policies, as a database of precious information.

(3) Conditions of SC

Next, we will consider the conditions of SC. Before doing so, we will confirm the principles of SC. Table 2 summarizes the principles of SC as adopted by the U.S., Britain, and NATO.

Table 2. Principles of SC in the U.S., Britain, and NATO

| Country/organization | Principles |
|----------------------|--|
| U.S. | (i) Leadership-Driven, (ii) Dialogue and Understanding, (iii) Responsive and Continuous, (iv) Results-Based, (v) Credible, (vi) Unity of Effort |
| Britain | (i) Policy-Driven, (ii) Engagement of diverse internal and external partners, (iii) Adaptability to the information environment, (iv) Assessment (v) Credible, (vi) Horizontal and vertical coherency of messages inside and outside the organization, (vii) Empowerment of authority to increase readiness in the information space |
| NATO | (i) Leadership, (ii) Understanding Audiences, (iii) Agility and Creativity, (iv) Assessment, (v) Credibility, (vi) Collaboration, comprehensiveness, continuity, (vii) Empowerment |

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Source: Quoted from U.K. integrated doctrine note “Strategic Communications: The Defence Contribution JDN 1/12” (January 2012), Annex 3A, “Comparator of Strategic communications Principles” (p. 3A-1).

Of the principles above, the four points of (i) (policy) leadership and guidance of leaders, (ii) assessment, (iii) credibility, and (iv) empowerment of authority and agility to increase readiness are shared. On the point of (policy) leadership and guidance of leaders in particular, the British integrated doctrine note stresses that it is policy leaders, commanding officers, and unit commanders who drive SC, and that the most important absolute precondition for achievement of policy execution and responsibilities is the continual securing of legitimacy in information domains.⁴⁶ In addition, NATO is striving to strengthen SC further in response to the way Russia put this thinking to effective use during the Crimean crisis in 2014, as seen in the March 2017 announcement by Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia Valery Gerasimov that “control of information is an essential precondition in combat.”⁴⁷ In this way, the principles of the U.S. and other countries describe this as something that should be focused on by leaders in order to secure legitimacy in the domain of information, which has a very major impact on the success or failure of strategy, and stress the necessity of implementing SC from a top-down approach.

We also should focus on (empowerment for) readiness. In the preceding section, we looked at an example of false information provided by terrorist organizations in the Afghanistan campaign successfully harming the reputation of the U.S. military. In responding to such false information and misreporting, the ability to respond immediately in order to counter the disinformation and empowerment concerning external communications to

the field level if possible have been described as essential.⁴⁸ This suggests the importance of SC as a countermeasure to restrict the impact of manipulation of public opinion through spreading false information and avoid falling into a situation that would be to our disadvantage.

In addition, consistency (of messages inside and outside the organization) also should be focused on. The White House report refers to synchronization of words and deeds as a core element of effective SC to advance U.S. national interests, policies, and objectives⁴⁹, while the Department of Defense report points out that the process of SC requires cooperation not only within the Department of Defense and the U.S. government but, as needed, with international partners and other partners as well, that U.S. words and deeds must be consistent and mutually reinforcing, and that there is a need to eliminate cases of inconsistency between words and deeds lessening the effects of SC.⁵⁰ In this way, cooperation within the government or with related countries as necessary, securing the consistency of messages, ensuring that words and deeds are in agreement, and consistent, concise messaging are extremely important in gaining support for policies in the international community.

Through this point, we have analyzed the definitions, backgrounds, development, and principles of SC in other countries, including the U.S. and Britain. These countries have developed and intensified their concepts of SC policies through repeated processes of trial and error based on factors such as lessons learned in the Iraq War, the Afghanistan campaign, and other venues. To Japan, as it develops full-fledged SC in the future, the concepts of SC policies adopted in these Western nations can serve as extremely useful information for reference.

Now, based on the above discussion, we will identify the conditions of SC for use in analysis of Japan's SC initiatives in the following section. In doing so, in light of the fact that Japan has little experience with SC policies compared to the relatively long histories of such policies in the U.S. and Britain, instead of simply adopting the SC principles from the U.S., Britain, and other nations, we will list subjects considered suitable as conditions based on the author's own examination, from a more fundamental and comprehensive point of view. These are identified below. The first concerns the perspective of conciseness and consistency of messages in communication (including consistency between words and actions). In implementing SC, it is essential that the message we communicate is both clear and consistent, and can be accepted and understood by the other party. In addition, there must not be any gaps between the words communicated by the government and related activities and behavior. This conforms to one of the principles of SC in the U.S. and Britain.

The second concerns the diversity of means of communication. Putting to use the various means that are available, including the activities of the Self-Defense Forces, as means of effectively communicating messages to target audiences will contribute to broadening the range of SC activities and implementing SC effectively. This is why this item is included as a condition of SC.

The third concerns the timeliness of communication. This is an element that could be considered important because information changes over time and communication not conducted at the proper moment could be less effective. In particular, just as the U.S. and other countries

identify readiness and agility as principles of SC, the timeliness of communication is especially important in order to demonstrate its effect as countermeasures.

The fourth concerns interorganizational coordination. This reflects the perspective, as seen in this paper's definition of SC, that government SC activities must be well coordinated and synchronized among related organizations.

The fifth concerns the selection of target audiences. This too has been identified as one of the conditions based on the thinking, as expressed in the definition of SC, that "impacting the understanding of the target audience" can be considered the most important aim of SC activities. That is, it is based on the point of view that communication should be based on thoroughly ascertaining the intended counterparties.

Using the above five conditions of SC as factors for evaluation, the following section will analyze Japan's SC initiatives from five perspectives.

2. Japan's SC initiatives

In this section, after first confirming the policy positioning of SC in Japan, we will employ the SC conditions derived in Section 1 to analyze, based on materials such as public documents from the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, and other government agencies, publications, materials announced to the media, and domestic and international media reports, the two cases of the initiatives related to realizing a "free and open Indo-Pacific" advanced by the Abe Administration since 2016 and Japan's security initiatives in response to

the nuclear and missile threats of North Korea since 2016.

(1) Policy positioning

In December 2013, under the second Abe Administration, the Japanese government formulated its first National Security Strategy. This strategy included a call for Japan to “*proactively and effectively communicate its policy to the world and its people,*” “*in order to promote its security policy,*” and to “*enhance its public relations in an integrated and strategic manner through a government-wide approach,*” “*with the Prime Minister’s office serving as the control tower*”⁵¹ (*author’s emphasis*). In addition, the National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2014 and Beyond, announced on the same day, stressed the need to enhance communication of information by the Ministry of Defense, stating, “The Ministry of Defense and SDF will *strengthen strategic public relations and communication* to enhance the dissemination of information via a diverse range of media, in order to secure domestic and overseas understanding which is vital to effectively conduct SDF duties”⁵² (*author’s emphasis*). Furthermore, as noted at the start of this paper, the new Defense Guidelines announced in December 2018 called for Japan to “further advance everyday efforts such as *strategic communications*”⁵³ (*author’s emphasis*).

On the other hand, qualitative changes in public diplomacy strategy also became apparent at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs around 2013, after the start of the second Abe Administration. For example, to promote strategic public and cultural diplomacy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the Public Diplomacy Strategy Division, which first met in October 2013⁵⁴. In addition, the FY2015 draft budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

greatly increased the budget allocated to strategic external communication, and the term “strategic external communication” appeared for the first time as the title to Part 4, Section 1 of the 2015 Diplomatic Bluebook⁵⁵. Also, the 2018 Diplomatic Bluebook mentioned that Japan was implementing external communication strategically based on the three pillars of (i) communicating policies and initiatives including the “true state” of Japan, (ii) communicating the diverse appeals of Japan, and (iii) developing the ranks of people who like and understand Japan as well as the fact that Japan was strengthening its communication initiatives based on perspectives such as those of understanding Japan’s contributions to international peace, stability, and prosperity and maintaining and strengthening the international order based on the rule of law⁵⁶.

In this way, government initiatives related to SC have advanced gradually since the launch of the second Abe Administration on December 26, 2012. However, it appears that it remains the case that SC-related initiatives still are in the developmental stage, and that no systematic framework, doctrine, or similar structure concerning SC has been established within the government. But this does not mean that Japan is not implementing SC at all. As also pointed out by Chiyuki Aoi, in fact Japan can be considered to be communicating its message proactively through its actions⁵⁷.

Accordingly, the following section will consider the kinds of SC initiatives being advanced by the government, mainly through the Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Forces, by looking at the two cases related to a “free and open Indo-Pacific” and those related to Japan’s security. In doing so, our analysis will be centered on the five elements seen in the SC

conditions derived in Section 1, part 3: (i) conciseness and consistency of messages, (ii) diversity of means of communication, (iii) timeliness of communication, (iv) interorganizational coordination, and (v) selection of target audiences.

(2) SC initiatives related to realizing a free and open Indo-Pacific

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan's Indo-Pacific vision is a diplomatic strategy introduced by Prime Minister Abe at the Tokyo International Conference of African Development (TICAD), held in Kenya in August 2016, aiming for economic growth throughout the zone connecting rapidly growing Asia with key areas of Africa, which has high growth potential, via the Indian and Pacific oceans⁵⁸. In addition, it explains that the maritime order in the Indo-Pacific region faces various threats including those of piracy, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, natural disasters, and criminality, and calls for maintaining and strengthening a free and open maritime order based on the rule of law in order to make the region an international public asset to enable regional stability and prosperity, through eliminating these threats and improving interconnectedness in the region through means such as high-quality infrastructure development⁵⁹. Specifically, this refers to peace and security initiatives including the pursuit of economic prosperity through means such as freedom of sea lanes, promotion and establishment of the rule of law and free trade, and enhancing interconnectedness, as well as supporting efforts to improve enforcement of the law of the sea, countering piracy, disaster prevention, and nonproliferation⁶⁰.

Under this thinking, the new Defense Guidelines first mentioned the term

“a free and open Indo-Pacific”⁶¹. Specifically, they state, “In line with the vision of free and open Indo-Pacific, Japan will strategically promote multifaceted and multilayered security cooperation, taking into account characteristics and situation specific to each region and country”⁶², clearly indicating the commitment of the Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Forces to this vision.

Under such circumstances, the Maritime Self-Defense Force carried out training exercises in the Indo-Pacific region in both 2017 and 2018. This involved dispatching a convoy of ships, some equipped with helicopters, to the Indo-Pacific region for several months to engage in joint training with the militaries of ASEAN nations, India, Sri Lanka, the U.S., Australia, Canada, and other nations as well as visiting ports in the region, in order to contribute to the peace and security of the region as well as fostering mutual understanding and strengthening relations of trust with countries in the region⁶³. In particular, the goal of the 2018 Indo-Pacific exercises was described as promotion of cooperation by the Maritime Self-Defense Force with various countries to realize regional peace and stability, as preconditions of a free and open Indo-Pacific. Thus, it is clear that the Maritime Self-Defense Force considers these exercises to be one means of achieving a “free and open Indo-Pacific”⁶⁴.

Here, we will analyze the 2018 Indo-Pacific training using the conditions described above.

A. Conciseness and consistency of messages

Although the August 21 press release of the Maritime Self-Defense Force concerning these exercises did not itself include the term “free and

open Indo-Pacific”⁶⁵, in a regular press conference held on the same date the Chief of Staff of the Maritime Self-Defense Force described the exercises as “consistent with the goals of the government's strategy for a free and open Indo-Pacific, of securing peace and stability in the region”⁶⁶. In addition, a special feature on the Maritime Self-Defense Force website concerning the Indo-Pacific exercises includes the statement, “Regional peace and stability is a necessary precondition of a free and open Indo-Pacific, and the Maritime Self-Defense Force is promoting cooperation with countries in the region to achieve this goal”⁶⁷. Thus, phrases referring to securing the peace and stability of a free and open Indo-Pacific are communicated as compact key messages, and since these have been mentioned in media reports as well, the conciseness of the message can be said to have been given adequate consideration. In addition, regarding the consistency of the message as well, there can be considered to be adequate consistency between words and deeds between the “words” of Prime Minister Abe, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defense, and other top leaders repeatedly using the phrase “free and open Indo-Pacific: and the deeds” of parties such as the Self-Defense Forces and the Japan Coast Guard (mentioned below), including the Indo-Pacific exercises.

B. Diversity of means of communication

The first communication used the phrase “to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific.” For example, over a period of nine days beginning on January 8, 2019, the Chief of Staff participated for the second year in a row in the Raisina Dialogue in India. In a panel discussion during this event, he

once again, as he had done the previous year, communicated the importance of international cooperation based on the universal values of the rule of law and free maritime transportation, as well as strong collaboration among Japan, the U.S., Australia, India, and France, among other factors, in order to “realize a free and open Indo-Pacific”⁶⁸.

In addition, the Maritime Staff Office communicated a message introducing the exercises in detail on its website. Specifically, the Maritime Self-Defense Force website includes a special feature on the Indo-Pacific exercises, which, in addition to basic information such as the purposes, periods, and operational overviews of the exercises, includes other detailed information such as photographs and videos of various aspects of the exercises. These videos in particular introduce the activities in detail, including subjects such as joint exercises with foreign militaries, providing tours of Maritime Self-Defense Force vessels, and joint press conferences with the commanders of other militaries, conducted over the roughly two months of the Indo-Pacific exercises. In this way, they provide an impression of the seriousness with which the Maritime Self-Defense Force approaches all aspects of the exercises as an effort toward a free and open Indo-Pacific. An English-language version of the site is available as well, providing largely the same information as the Japanese version. Furthermore, information also is communicated through Twitter, Facebook, and other social media, and photos and videos are published through YouTube and other means.

These exercises included visits to five countries—the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, and Singapore—and bilateral press conferences by exercise commanders (general officers) in all of these but

the Philippines. Joint press releases also were held with the commanders of visiting troops in Indonesia and India. In light of the fact that local media reported on these press conferences, they can be described as having been effective means of communication⁶⁹. Of particular note regarding these is an event held during the visit to the Philippines. The forces at Subic Bay on September 1 gave a tour on board the convoy vessel *Kaga* to President Duterte. Since, in fact, President Duterte also had boarded the convoy vessel *Izumo* during the FY2017 Indo-Pacific exercises, this marked the second year in a row in which he met with the forces dispatched on these exercises. His visit to the *Kaga* was announced by the Philippine Information Agency, an official organ of the government of the Philippines⁷⁰, and a video of it was made available by the Philippines News and Information Bureau⁷¹. It also was reported widely by local media⁷². While the joint press conferences in India and Indonesia, mentioned above, also were reported on by some local media, comparison with the case of the Philippines shows that the volume of reporting clearly was higher in the latter case. This can be considered to reflect the very strong impact of the visit by President Duterte, and although it requires considerable time and effort to coordinate, since when realized it leads to considerable media coverage it will be important to secure the presence of presidents and other important members of the government in the future as well.

In this way, Japan can be considered to be carrying out proactive efforts to combine various and diverse means of communication and communicate its messages in multifaceted ways.

C. Timeliness of communication

A look at the website of the Maritime Self-Defense Force shows that in addition to being updated for individual events, it also is updated in a timely manner through communication via social media, and thus it can be considered to have secured the factor of timeliness. However, on the subject of synchronization of communication, there is one point on which there can be considered to be room for improvement. This concerns the press conference conducted on August 21 by Minister of Defense Onodera, at the time the Maritime Self-Defense Force announced these exercises. On that date, the Minister of Defense was on an official visit to Sri Lanka. While he held the press conference a little after 7:00 pm Japan time after ending a meeting with the Sri Lankan Minister of Defence, and at that time a decision already had been made on a visit to Sri Lanka during the Indo-Pacific exercises, the minister did not mention the Indo-Pacific exercises. If the Minister of Defense had announced in Sri Lanka that the Maritime Self-Defense Force craft *Kaga* would engage in joint exercises with Sri Lanka in September on behalf of the peace and stability of a free and open Indo-Pacific, the Sri Lankan media might have focused on the Indo-Pacific exercises, and as a result reported more widely on it when the *Kaga* visited Sri Lanka in September. While it is unclear what kinds of coordination had taken place between internal bureaus and the Maritime Staff Office regarding the announcement of these exercises, from the perspective of synchronization of communication, and in consideration of the influence that a high-ranking government official such as the minister possesses, it is thought that it would have been more effective if the Minister of Defense also had said something about the visit to Sri Lanka

during the Indo-Pacific exercises at that time.

D. Interorganizational coordination

With regard to coordination with other ministries and agencies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in particular described the arrivals at Changi Naval Base in Singapore and at Subic Bay in the Philippines on the homepages of the embassies to Singapore and the Philippines, with photographs. From this we can confirm that efforts were made to coordinate public information between the Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁷³. In addition, during the visit by President Duterte to the dispatched forces, described above, Secretary to the Minister of Defense Ono and Ambassador to the Philippines Haneda also were on hand to welcome the President, suggesting that sufficient coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had taken place.

Also, every year since 2000 the Japan Coast Guard has dispatched patrol craft to the waters of Southeast Asia for about two months as part of efforts to combat piracy, with the aims of helping to improve the enforcement capabilities of the maritime security agencies of coastal nations in that region and building and promoting ties for collaboration and cooperation. During the dispatch of patrol vessels in October 2018⁷⁴, Prime Minister Abe, who was in Australia for a summit between Japan and that country, visited the *Echigo* patrol craft while it was in port in Darwin and briefed the crew. In doing so, he noted that a free and open Indo-Pacific based on the rule of law should be realized on a global basis by building and strengthening the international maritime order through patrols to counter piracy and coordination with the maritime security agencies of other

countries⁷⁵, and this was reported on by major Australian media. *The Australian*, one of Australia's leading newspapers, reported through a video on its website that Japan's Prime Minister Abe had toured a Japan Coast Guard patrol craft in port in Darwin as a part of the strategic competition for supremacy in the South Pacific, although it did not report the words "free and open Indo-Pacific"⁷⁶. Linking the Prime Minister's tour to the dispatch of patrol craft can be considered to have led to these reports in foreign media, and as in the case of President Duterte's visit to the *Izumo* mentioned above, collaboration with high-ranking government officials can be said to be a highly effective way to attract media attention. Activities such as this tour by the Prime Minister of the *Echigo* in Darwin is surmised to have been planned and implemented through collaboration among the Japan Coast Guard, the Cabinet Secretariat, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other agencies, and it can be considered to have been carried out through close cooperation among government agencies.

E. Selection of target audiences

But what about target audiences? While in fact it is unclear which classes of people, in which countries, the Maritime Self-Defense Force considers to be its target audiences, we will attempt here a simple analysis based on matters such as the results of communication. Communication by the Maritime Self-Defense Force is focused mainly on the actions of forces engaged in exercises and other activities, communicated mainly through homepages describing their activities and press conferences by the minister, the Chief of Staff of the Maritime Self-Defense Force, and exercise commanding officers, as well as third-party media when these activities

become the subjects of media reports and discussions by experts. These communications are made mainly in the languages of Japanese and English. As such, their target audiences can be considered to consist mainly of the Japanese public and government-related parties, members of the general public, media, and other parties in countries visited and around the world who can understand English.

While these exercises also were reported on by some foreign media, there is a need for further investigation and research in order to verify the degree to which these communications had their intended impacts on target audiences.

(3) SC initiatives related to Japan's security

From January 2016 through November 2017, in addition to three nuclear tests North Korea also launched 40 ballistic missiles, including some that flew over Japan and some ICBM-class long-range missiles⁷⁷. While North Korea had launched ballistic missiles and tested nuclear weapons previously, since over this period it launched ballistic missiles at an unparalleled frequency and tried to advance its military technology rapidly through means such as extending their range, these activities caused concern among people not only in Asia but around the world. For this reason, the East Asian security environment worsened considerably around this time, leading to increased military tensions.

A. Conciseness and consistency of messages, timeliness of communication, and Japan-U.S. cooperation

While this threat of North Korean nuclear missiles was rising, the Air

and Maritime Self-Defense Forces engaged in a number of joint exercises with the U.S. military in preparation for missile launches and nuclear weapons tests, announcing these exercises publicly when they took place. The Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation agreed to by Japan and the U.S. in April 2015 state, “the two governments will take measures to ensure Japan’s peace and security in all phases, seamlessly, from peacetime to contingencies, including situations when an armed attack against Japan is not involved.” It includes in such measures “develop(ing) ways to implement the appropriate Alliance response, including flexible deterrent options, as well as actions aimed at de-escalation” and “coordinat(ing) strategic messaging through appropriate channels on issues that could potentially affect Japan’s peace and security”⁷⁸. This can be interpreted as strategic communication of messages through joint exercises by the Self-Defense Forces and the U.S. military as one means of deterrence of North Korean nuclear missile development and Japan-U.S. coordination.

Specifically, on September 13, 2016, four days after a North Korean nuclear test on September 9, two F-2s from the Air Self-Defense Force’s Eighth Wing and two B-1Bs from the U.S. Air Force’s 34th Training Wing (based in Guam) conducted joint exercises in training airspace near Kyushu⁷⁹. When this timing of four days after a nuclear test is considered in light of the SC principles of readiness and agility, its relative quickness can be regarded highly as a means of reliably communicating a suitable message to North Korea. In addition, it was pointed out in Section 1 that delegation of authority to the field level is an important requirement of communicating such as counter-message quickly, and while it is unclear

whether or not such a structure was secured, judging by the very short period of time it took to carry out such action it is possible that such a structure had been secured to some degree.

At the same time, while the exercises also were announced on the website of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command as being “in response to North Korean nuclear testing”⁸⁰, the announcement by the Self-Defense Forces simply related that joint exercises had been conducted. While this is a fine point, it may show that there is room for improvement from the perspective of the consistency and conciseness of SC messaging.

Also, on November 12, 2017, the Maritime Self-Defense Force took part in joint exercises in the Sea of Japan with U.S. warships including three aircraft carriers: the USS *Ronald Reagan*, the USS *Nimitz*, and the USS *Theodore Roosevelt*. These were announced publicly on the same day⁸¹. While the Indo-Pacific Command also announced them at about the same time, the U.S. military’s announcement announced merely that the three carrier strike groups had begun exercises in the Western Pacific, without once mentioning the fact that it was a joint exercise with Japan⁸². Regarding this difference too, it is unclear whether it was due to some kind of policy decision or a simple lack of sufficient coordination and cooperation. Still, as with the joint air exercises described above, further SC cooperation would be desirable because integration of messages between the U.S. and Japan could make them more effective from the perspectives of consistency and conciseness.

B. Diversity of means of communication

Furthermore, on the point of means of communication, while the

Self-Defense Forces released only a press release, on November 13 the Indo-Pacific Command also released a powerful video about one minute long with a musical soundtrack, captioned, “These exercises are a testament to America’s ironclad commitment to their allies and to securing lasting peace and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific”⁸³. This method of releasing video in addition to simple text and photos should be a useful example for the Self-Defense Forces as well, in consideration of the way it helps to disseminate the message, including via the media.

C. Summary

In Section 2, we analyzed Japan’s SC initiatives from an external point of view, looking chiefly at public information such as published government documents and materials released to the press. As a result, we were able to confirm the presence of SC initiatives by Japan, including consistency of words and deeds between the government’s message on realizing a free and open Indo-Pacific on the one hand and the activities of the Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Japan Coast Guard on the other, as well as coordination on public information between the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, with regard to Japan’s security-related SC initiatives, we saw that communicating a message through action by engaging in joint exercises that show the strength of the Japan-U.S. alliance and its high level of mutual cooperation, as well as their resolve to defend Japan and their high capabilities for doing so⁸⁴, the Self-Defense Forces and the U.S. military attempted to prevent further escalation by North Korea. However, we also saw that there was room for improvement in the consistency and unity of messaging, since

some differences were identified between Japan and the U.S. with regard to the content of the information announced.

With regard to these government SC initiatives, while it can be surmised that a framework exists for coordination among the National Security Agency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the Japan Coast Guard, and other government agencies, it remains unclear whether or not concepts such as the definitions and principles of SC have been developed as thoroughly as in the U.S. or Britain and, when viewed at the level of the Ministry of Defense, it is unclear whether or not the division of roles between internal bureaus and the land, maritime, and air staff offices and division of responsibilities between policy and public information sections within agencies have been secured sufficiently. However, in consideration of the facts that compared to the history of U.S. and British SC policies, which have been implemented since the 2000s, Japan's SC policies only began at the end of 2012 at the earliest, and that the term "strategic communications" first appeared in the new Defense Guidelines at the end of 2018, it would be natural to consider Japan's SC policies to have only just begun to take shape. Accordingly, the next section will consider, starting from a clean slate, the policies that the Japanese government should take in order to implement SC policies fully, in light of the results of the above analysis of Western SC and the state of Japan's SC initiatives.

3. Implications for Japan

(1) Conceptual review and promotion

As seen in Section 1, in countries such as the U.S. and Britain the

concept of SC has been developed and has been structured and systematized in published documents. For this reason, it is possible for all government employees to have a shared understanding of SC, and the efficacy of SC policies can be expected to improve. But what about Japan's? Although the new Defense Guidelines do identify the course of action of strengthening SC initiatives, it cannot be said that the concept of SC itself is developed thoroughly therein. Why is that? One possible reason is an issue that arises from the difficulty of understanding the concept of SC. We saw above how in 2012 the U.S. Department of Defense pointed out the issue of redundancy of personnel, organizations, and functions due to the ambiguity of the term SC and switched to the more appropriate expression CS. While it was blamed on confusion due to terminology, it is conceivable that the largest reason may have been a dysfunctional state arising as a result of redundancy of functions with diplomacy, which normally is the province of the State Department, and the public information sections of individual agencies. If such an issue arose in the U.S., then a similar problem also could arise in Japan, which has similar administrative agencies and functions. In particular, as pointed out by Paul Cornish, et al., it is important to coordinate relations with public and cultural diplomacy, which involves a similar concept⁸⁵. Masafumi Kaneko, et al. define public and cultural diplomacy as activities to communicate information through diverse media, in forms such as building relations, maintaining dialogue, and interacting with individuals and organizations overseas, to contribute to a country's foreign interests and objectives by increasing its presence, improving its image, and deepening the understanding of it, and by promoting the values that it

considers important⁸⁶. As is clear from a comparison of this definition with that of SC, this concept largely coincides with SC in the sense of communicating information to promote the national interest. For this reason, there is likely to be a need to develop fully the relationship between SC and public and cultural diplomacy, which is under the purview of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In this way, for Japan too to fully implement SC, as in the U.S. it is important first of all to define SC thoroughly and build on the concept as Japanese policy. In doing so, it is essential to refer to the background of and changes in prior adoption of SC policies in the U.S., Britain, and elsewhere. Specifically, there probably is a need to clarify Japan's SC policy objectives and goals, list up relevant methods and means, clarify the responsibilities of individual government agencies-clarifying the roles of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense in particular-and establish guidelines for regulation and coordination within the government and with allies and other parties, among other efforts to describe in overview the thinking and implementation guidelines for SC on Japan's part, all while referring to the development of the SC concept in the U.S. and other countries. In addition, there also is a need to examine carefully whether the term SC should continue to be used. Furthermore, it would be effective to take measures in advance for anticipated issues, through closely identifying the lessons and issues of SC in the U.S. and other countries. For example, one possible method would be to decide in advance on frameworks for policy coordination to make smooth adjustments in the event that any problems arise, or to review all aspects of the concept as a whole, including its relation to similar concepts, policies,

etc., instead of simply elucidating the differences with public and cultural diplomacy in terms of basic thinking and organizations or functions. Also, building on the concept and clear division of organizational roles alone is not enough. Actual implementation of SC requires promoting a correct understanding among not only policymakers but also practitioners in the institutions and organizations that implement policy as well as other related parties, including their superiors. For this reason, the most important foundation for implementing SC policies consists of systematization and standardization of organized concepts and guidelines, and ensuring that a shared understanding of SC has been established within the government.

(2) Development of SC functions

Development of organizations and institutions in charge of SC should be identified as one of the most important factors in SC implementation. As also touched on in Section 1, in the U.S. NSC staff carry out strategic planning on SC at the government level and the U.S. Department of Defense is an important participant in communication, while the State Department, as the institution responsible for public diplomacy, has established the new post of Assistant to the President for National Security in charge of SC, and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy has been appointed the person responsible for SC in the Department of Defense. In Britain as well, the NSC is tasked with creation of long-term national narratives, the assistant to the Prime Minister for national security influences the leaders of other agencies on national security risks, and the Aide to the Chief of Staff (responsible for military strategy) coordinates communication with related government agencies⁸⁷.

As this illustrates, SC is a national security policy that should be implemented government-wide, Japan too needs a system similar to the one in the U.S., under which the National Security Agency guides individual agencies. For this reason, it is important that the National Security Agency take the lead in identifying government-wide policies on SC, establishing goals, and building a shared understanding among those related to government before implementing initiatives, with regard to the types of communication tools to be used and their timing, as well as how to influence target audiences and advance government policy implementation effectively. Identifying government policies on SC in this way would be effective because it would enable semi-automatic implementation of SC in a manner in which each agency supports government policies. In addition, it also should make it possible to establish a framework for policy coordination on SC by related agencies under the leadership of the National Security Agency, and to realize even closer cooperation through periodic operation on a steady-state basis.

Within the Ministry of Defense and the Self-Defense Forces as well, it can be considered important not only to establish specialized sections in charge of SC in internal bureaus and the staff offices but also, to put in place a top-down leadership structure, to add to the responsibilities of the Director General of the Bureau of Defense Policy and the Director General of the Policy and Programs Department those of the directors of SC policies for internal bureaus and each of the staff offices, respectively, so as to build a structure that will enable swift, smooth high-level internal and external coordination with the National Security Agency and other related agencies.

(3) Human-resources development

No matter how well-developed an SC system may be, it is ultimately human beings who will manage and implement it. In the U.S., Britain, and NATO as well, the importance to SC implementation of securing human resources who are highly knowledgeable on the subject has been pointed out⁸⁸. For this reason, there is a need for practitioners in the National Security Agency, as the section guiding SC policies within the government, and in the sections in charge of actually carrying out SC policies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense, to be highly familiar with SC. To realize this, it is essential to dispatch staff to educational seminars and other programs organized by the U.S. and Britain or by NATO, to let them learn about the fundamentals of SC and to use the acquired knowledge for drafting government SC policies. In addition, as also noted in Section 1, SC must be led by commanders. Therefore, the higher ranking a leader is in the organization, the better he or she needs to understand and take leadership on SC. For this reason, it might be highly effective to invite SC experts from the U.S. or Britain to lead training sessions for high-ranking officials in related sections and for our staff to participate in international conferences and academic seminars on the theme of SC to expand related knowledge, and furthermore to put SC on the agenda in policy meetings with the U.S. and Britain to discuss subjects such as best practices and lessons.

However, it must be noted that the terms of office of practitioners in government agencies usually are about two years, with frequent transfers. While this does not apply to SC alone, in light of the importance of SC as a national security policy it would be desirable to develop HR systems and

manage human resources in manners appropriate to the periods required to develop human resources and to the maintenance of people's skill levels related to SC. To address such issues, it would be worth considering the establishment of SC specialist positions intended to assign personnel such as Self-Defense Force officials to SC-related sections, in a manner similar to the public information posts in the U.S. military. One of the things that should be discussed in this case is how to make sure that those who are assigned to SC related posts will not receive any unfavorable treatment in terms of their career development.

(4) Improving cooperation with the U.S. and using communication by third parties in SC

In Section 2, based on the analysis from an external point of view, we determined that the Japanese government's initiatives that could be considered to fit in the category of SC were being conducted fairly successfully in terms of consistency and conciseness of messaging within the government, cooperation among related agencies, diversity of means of communication, and timeliness. However, as pointed out in the text of that section, we did find room for further improvement with regard to SC coordination with the U.S. military. In particular, when communicating messages on joint Japan-U.S. activities conducted to contribute to the security of Japan and the surrounding region, such as joint Japan-U.S. military exercises in response to missile launches or nuclear testing by North Korea, there is a need for efforts to maximize the efficacy of messaging through cooperation between both countries to ensure the consistency of the content of such messages and synchronizing their timing,

as well as having high-ranking government officials announce such messages verbally at the same time. For this purpose, relying solely on coordination at the field level at all times would not be appropriate. For example, since it is likely that many cases require decision-making at a high levels in the U.S. government, there is a need for frameworks to enable flexible coordination in accordance with the circumstances, such as frameworks for coordination between internal bureaus and the office of the Secretary of Defense and for coordination between the National Security Agency and NSC staff, as necessary. For this purpose, there is a need not only to use the alliance coordination mechanism (ACM) but also to create in advance a framework to enable coordination at the governmental level in an emergency.

In doing so there also is a need to develop an environment to make it easier to earn the support of the general public in the international community, through not only communicating subjective information through means such as text, spoken words, photos, and video from related parties themselves, via media such as press releases, social media, and press conferences, but also communicating objective information from third parties such as the media, foreign government agencies and organizations, or experts and think tanks. Furthermore, it is likely to be very important for the purpose of further deepening SC cooperation with the U.S. to thoroughly develop the concepts behind Japan's SC policies , to explain them to the U.S. and to earn its understanding of them.

(5) Use of military exchange programs etc.

Once the National Security Agency has identified a government policy

on SC, the Ministry of Defense needs to support it effectively in order to contribute to the government's SC to the maximum extent. One effective method of doing so is through the use of military exchange programs and similar activities. Specifically, by linking military exchange programs conducted by the Ministry of Defense and other international programs such as joint exercises with other countries' militaries to the government's SC policies, these can be used as a means of supporting the government's SC policies. That is, instead of the traditional approach of implementing such programs on an individual basis as one-off activities, they would be connected to SC and used as communication tools for target audiences. For this reason, the Ministry of Defense would need a framework for considering in advance whether or not any such programs could be used as tools to support government SC policies. In addition, when a program has been identified that could be used for such purposes, the need probably would arise to work out plans with related agencies on time, place, implementation guidelines, and other related matters, at a stage prior to the implementation of the program. Doing so would transform what had been conducted as independent, one-off programs through now into policy tools with strategic importance as SC, thus contributing to the implementation of government policy. Accordingly, the Ministry of Defense too probably would need a framework to enable such a series of coordination activities and its own unique plans for facilitating their implementation.

Conclusion

In this paper, in Section 1 we first defined SC for the purpose of this paper based on the definitions of the U.S., Britain, NATO, and others, as

well as examining the background and process of the advent of SC policies in the U.S. and Britain, in order to clearly identify the five conditions important to SC implementation ((i) conciseness and consistency of messages, (ii) diversity of means of communication, (iii) timeliness of communication, (iv) interorganizational coordination, and (v) selection of target audiences). In Section 2, we analyzed the most likely examples of SC initiatives implemented by Japan through now—SC initiatives related to realizing a “free and open Indo-Pacific” and those related to Japan’s security—using the five conditions derived in Section 1. Lastly, in Section 3 we considered the policies that the Japanese government and the Ministry of Defense should undertake in order to implement SC policies effectively in the future, based on the discussion in Sections 1 and 2.

From the start, SC has been a policy concept established in the U.S., Britain, and elsewhere, and as such it is a brand new concept to Japan. In addition, as seen in the efforts by the U.S. government through now to establish a single, unitary concept of SC, it is an extremely abstract and difficult-to-understand policy concept. It is likely to take some time for SC in this way to permeate through the Japanese government to a degree at which it can be implemented throughout the government through the coordination among related agencies based on a shared understanding.

However, as seen in the example above of terrorists releasing false information during the Afghanistan campaign that successfully created a negative image of the U.S. military around the world, or in the importance assigned by Russia to the control of information in a campaign, the fight to secure control or legitimacy in the information domain is intensifying, and it would be no exaggeration to say that success or failure in earning

support for or securing the legitimacy of our policies in the international community is directly related to the success or failure of security policies. For this reason, it is very important to realize policies by communicating consistent information in a timely manner as a national government, to influence important audiences such as organizations and government officials in the international community or foreign publics with regard to Japan's doctrines and legitimacy, in order to gain understanding and support for Japan's policies. If not, then it is likely to be difficult to achieve policy objectives no matter how superior a policy may be or how much advantage it may deliver as a military means.

For this reason, as noted at the start of Section 3, in full-fledged promotion of SC policies Japan must start by developing and promoting its own unique concept of SC. To make steady, step-by-step, well-grounded progress, it is highly important to make clear just what is meant by SC, to build on the concept, and to systematize and promote it to achieve a shared understanding among related parties and organizations. Next, it will be necessary to develop a framework for policy coordination among related organizations under the leadership of the National Security Agency and to enhance the Ministry of Defense's SC functions. Furthermore, it is also essential at the same time to train human resources who will possess specialized knowledge concerning SC. In addition, enhancing cooperation in the field of SC with Japan's ally the U.S. is another pressing issue, and it is also important to pay attention to communication of information via third parties. What's more, it can be considered important for the Ministry of Defense and the Japan Self-Defense Forces to adopt an attitude under which they will contribute in even more efficient and effective ways to the

SC initiatives advanced by the government, through utilizing SC in various programs under integrated Ministry policies and plans.

In addition to initiatives such as those described above, it can be considered important in order to improve SC functions in Japan to provide underpinning support for stimulating domestic SC studies and research.

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