Based on the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements, together with Japan’s own efforts, constitute the cornerstone for Japan’s security. The Japan-U.S. Alliance centered on bilateral security arrangements functions as public goods that contribute to the stability and prosperity, not only of Japan but also of the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large. As the security environment surrounding Japan becomes increasingly severe, and the United States, at the same time, maintains and strengthens its engagement and presence in the Asia-Pacific region, it has become more important than ever to strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance for the security of Japan.

The military presence of U.S. Forces in Japan not only contributes to the defense of Japan, but also functions as deterrence and response capabilities to address contingencies in the Asia-Pacific region, and serves as a core element of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements. On the other hand, since the stationing of U.S. Forces in Japan impacts the living environment of local residents, efforts that correspond to the actual situation of each region must be made to mitigate the impact on regions such as Okinawa.

Chapter 4
Strengthening of the Japan-U.S. Alliance

Section 1
Significance of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements

1 Maintenance of Japan’s Peace and Security

In the current international community, a watertight defense system capable of responding to every contingency, ranging from all types of armed attacks including the use of nuclear weapons to coercion or intimidation by military power, is necessary to secure the peace, security, and sovereignty of the nation. It is difficult even for the United States to guarantee its security on its own. Much more than that, it would be difficult for Japan to ensure its national security solely through its unilateral efforts given its population, land, and economy. Moreover, such a strategy would not necessarily contribute to regional stability.

Consequently, Japan has maintained its peace and security, centered on the Security Arrangements with the world’s dominant military power, the United States, with which it shares basic values such as democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and a capitalist economy as well as an interest in maintaining the peace and security of the world, and has strong economic ties.

Specifically, Japan and the United States will take bilateral action in the event of an armed attack against Japan, based on Article 5 of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, and Japan will provide facilities and areas for the U.S. Forces, based on Article 6 of the treaty. If a nation plans to attack Japan, the attacker must be prepared to confront not only the defense capability of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), but also the overwhelming military strength of the United States, due to the U.S. obligation to defend Japan in the event of an armed attack. As a result, the opposing nation clearly recognizes that it will suffer grievously if it carries out an invasion, and such desires will be abandoned at the planning stage. In other words, this serves as deterrence against attacks.
Japan intends to create a seamless posture and secure its peace and security by effectively utilizing the deterrence capabilities of the U.S. military as well as maintaining its own adequate defense capability.

2 Maintenance of Peace and Stability in the Region Surrounding Japan

Article 6 of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty states that contributing to the security of Japan and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East is the purpose of the use of facilities and areas by the U.S. Forces in Japan. This provision is based on the recognition that the security of Japan is closely tied to the peace and security of the Far East region to which Japan belongs.

In the regions surrounding Japan, there are many states and the like with massive military power, including some states that retain nuclear weapons or continue nuclear development. In addition to issues or tension caused by changes in the balance of power, situations that we call “gray zones” over sovereignty of the territory or vested interests are likely to arise, and this risks further aggravation of the situation. In such a security environment, the military presence of the U.S. Forces in Japan provides deterrence against unexpected contingencies caused by various security issues or unstable factors, providing a great sense of security to the nations in the region and thus fulfilling a role as public goods. Also, the close bonds of cooperation based on the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements constitute the foundation of the United States’ commitment to the peace and stability of the region surrounding Japan. These arrangements, complemented by the alliances established between the United States and other countries in the region such as South Korea, Australia, Thailand and the Philippines and also by the friendly relations developed with other countries, play an indispensable role in maintaining the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region.

3 Further Stabilization of the International Security Environment

The Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements are the foundation for a comprehensive and friendly cooperative relationship between Japan and the United States, not only in defense but also in a wide range of areas, including politics, economy, and society. The Japan-U.S. Alliance, with these security arrangements at its core, also forms the axis of Japan’s foreign policy. It contributes to Japan’s ability to implement positive efforts to maintain the peace and security of the international community, including promotion of multinational security dialogue and cooperation, and cooperation with the United Nations.

Currently, we are confronted with global security challenges that are extremely difficult for any single country to tackle alone, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, international terrorism, and acts of piracy, as well as new risks concerning stable use of the seas, outer space and cyberspace, and it is important for countries to work together from peacetime. The strong bonds forged between Japan and the United States are also playing an important role in the efforts implemented by Japan to effectively respond to such challenges.

In particular, under the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements, the SDF and the U.S. Forces are working together in peacetime in a variety of areas to strengthen their cooperation. This close coordination lays the foundation for various forms of international collaboration such as antipiracy, undertaken by the SDF and the U.S. Forces, and leads to enhancement of the operational effectiveness of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements.

The peace and prosperity of the international community are closely linked to those of Japan. Accordingly, by cooperating with the United States, which possesses preeminent international operational capabilities, Japan is able to advance measures to further stabilize the global security environment. This in turn is enhancing the security and prosperity of Japan.