Part III

Initiatives to Protect the Lives and Property of the People as well as Securing the Territorial Land, Water and Airspace

Chapter 1
Organizations Responsible for the Defense of Japan, and Effective Deterrence and Handling

Chapter 2
Active Promotion of Security Cooperation

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Section 1

Organizational Structure Supporting Defense Capability

1 Organization of the MOD/SDF

To fulfill their mission of defending Japan, the Ministry of Defense (MOD)/the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) consist of various organizations, mainly the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces as armed forces.

See>> Fig. III-1-1-1 (Organizational Chart of the Ministry of Defense); Fig. III-1-1-2 (Outline of the Ministry of Defense)

2 Systems to Support the Minister of Defense

The Minister of Defense is responsible for issues related to the defense of Japan as the head of the MOD, and is in overall charge of the SDF duties in accordance with the provisions of the SDF Act. The Minister is supported by the State Minister of Defense, the Parliamentary Vice-Ministers of Defense (two) and the Senior Adviser to the Minister of Defense. There are also the Special Advisers to the Minister of Defense, who advise the Minister of Defense, and the Defense Council, which deliberates on basic principles concerning administrative affairs under the Ministry’s jurisdiction. Furthermore, there are the Administrative Vice-Minister of Defense, who organizes and supervises the administrative affairs of each bureau and organization to support the Minister of Defense, and the Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs, who is responsible for the overall coordination of duties such as those related to international affairs.

Moreover, the Internal Bureau of the MOD, Joint Staff, Ground Staff Office, Maritime Staff Office, Air Staff Office, and the Acquisition, Technology & Logistics Agency (ATLA) as an external bureau have been established in the MOD. The Internal Bureau of the MOD is responsible for basic policy relating to the duties of the SDF. The Director-General of the Minister’s Secretariat and the Directors-General of each Bureau within the Internal Bureau shall, along with the Commissioner of ATLA who is in charge of defense equipment administration, support the Minister of Defense in accordance with their respective responsibilities, by providing the Minister of Defense assistant from a policy perspective – namely, to ensure that the affairs under the jurisdiction of the MOD are properly carried out in accordance with laws and regulations in order to accomplish the mission of the MOD. The Joint Staff is a staff organization for the Minister of Defense concerning the operation of the SDF. The Chief of Joint Staff provides centralized support for the operations of the SDF for the Minister of Defense from a military expert’s perspective. The Ground Staff, Maritime Staff and Air Staff are the staff organizations for the Minister of Defense concerning their respective services except operations of the SDF, with the Chiefs of Staff for the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF), the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) and the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) acting as the top-ranking expert advisers to the Minister of Defense regarding these services. In this manner, the MOD has ensured that the support for the Minister from a policy perspective and the support for the Minister from a military expert’s perspective shall be provided in a well-balanced manner like the two wheels of a vehicle, so to speak, in order for the Minister of Defense to appropriately make decisions. This existing concept regarding the support system for the Minister of Defense has been made even more explicit by the Article 12 of the Ministry of Defense Establishment Act, which has been amended to stipulate that the support for the Minister of Defense provided by the Director-General of the Minister’s Secretariat and the Directors-General of each Bureau as well as the Commissioner of ATLA shall be conducted in cooperation with the support for the Minister by each Chief of Staff, since 2015, when the Act was amended for the establishment of ATLA and the reorganization of Joint Staff etc., as part of an initiative for the MOD reform.¹

¹ The MOD and the SDF form a single organization for national defense. Whereas the term “Ministry of Defense” refers to the administrative aspects of the organization, which manages and operates the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF, the term “SDF” refers to the operational aspects of the organizations whose mission is the defense of Japan.
Organizational Chart of the Ministry of Defense

Base of Defense Administration in Regional Areas

The MOD has Regional Defense Bureaus in eight locations across the country (Sapporo City, Sendai City, Saitama City, Yokohama City, Osaka City, Hiroshima City, Fukuoka City, and Kadena Town) as its local branch offices in charge of comprehensive defense administration.

In addition to implementing measures to alleviate the burden on local communities hosting bases and inspecting equipment, Regional Defense Bureaus carry out various activities to obtain the understanding and cooperation of both local public entities and local residents toward the MOD/SDF activities.

See>> Part III, Chapter 4, Section 1 (Collaboration with Local Communities)

2 Joint Operations System of the Self-Defense Forces

In order to rapidly and effectively fulfill the duties of the SDF, the MOD/SDF has adopted the joint operations system in which the GSDF, the MSDF, and the ASDF are operated integrally. The MOD/SDF is making efforts to strengthen the foundation of the joint operations as well as to enhance the functions of the Joint Staff in light of the current security environment.

Outline of Joint Operations System

(1) Role of the Chief of Staff

a. The Chief of Joint Staff develops a joint operations concept for SDF operations, and centrally supports the MOD on SDF operations from a military expert’s perspective.
b. The Minister’s commands concerning the operations of the SDF shall be delivered through the Chief of Joint Staff and orders concerning operations of the SDF shall be executed by the Chief of Joint Staff. In doing this, the Minister’s commands and orders shall be delivered through the Chief of Joint Staff not only in cases where a joint task force is organized, but also in cases where a single SDF unit is employed to respond.

(2) Relationship between Chief of Staff, Joint Staff, and Other Chiefs of Staff

The Joint Staff undertakes functions relating to the operations of the SDF, while the Ground, Maritime and Air Staff Offices undertake functions for unit maintenance, such as personnel affairs, building-up defense capability, and education and training.

See>> Fig. III-1-1-3 (Operational System of the SDF and Roles of the Chief of Joint Staff and the Chiefs of Staff of the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces)

3 This applies to the case in which a special unit is organized to carry out a specific duty, or the required troops are placed partly under the authority of a commander outside of their usual command structure based on Article 23, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the SDF Act, and refers to units, which are made up of more than two units of the GSDF, the MSDF, and the ASDF.
addition, the Joint Staff Councilor, a post for civilian officials at the level of a division director and department director general has been established and staffed with necessary subordinates to assist the Joint Staff Councilor.

Establishment of Foundation to Enhance the Joint Operations Structure

Within the joint operations structure, communication of accurate commands and prompt information sharing between the units in the GSDF, the MSDF and the ASDF are crucial. The MOD/SDF is required to maintain a command and control function utilizing an advanced communications network and a system for sharing intelligence in order to strengthen the joint operational foundation. Thus, the MOD/SDF continues to develop a wide-ranging and flexible communications system that uses advanced communications technology available both within and outside Japan.

At the unit level, they are required to create plans to be able to respond to various situations, while at the same time they are also required to maintain conditions to be ready for executing duties through joint training and other means. For this purpose, personnel from other SDF branches are stationed at major command headquarters under normal circumstances, and the number of such staff personnel is increased as necessary.

In addition, topics such as the improvement of education and training, the SDF Headquarter structure, the human resources development, and standardization of equipment will continue to be reviewed, aiming for a more effective joint operations system, and necessary measures will be taken to realize this.

Reform of the Ministry of Defense

Background and Direction of the Reform

Following the considerations made by the “Council for Reforming the Ministry of Defense,” which was held at the Prime Minister’s Office in 2007 in response to the frequent incidence of scandals within the MOD/SDF, the MOD made various initiatives aimed at the MOD reform, including thorough adherence to rules and regulations, and the establishment of operational management that prioritizes the execution of duties, with the aim of total optimization; additionally, in 2009, the establishment of the Defense Council under law, the abolition of the post of the Director of Defense and the establishment of the Senior Adviser to the Minister of Defense (presently the Special Adviser to the Minister of Defense) were implemented in
order to strengthen support for the Minister of Defense and to ensure civilian control thoroughly.

Following this, in the “Direction of the MOD Reform” arranged in August 2013 at the “Committee for the Deliberations on the MOD Reform,” established in the MOD in the same year, it was determined that the following full-fledged reform would be undertaken, taking matters specified in previous considerations into account, and considering the following situational changes, such as the increasing severity of the security environment surrounding Japan, recognition of the lessons learned relating to the unit operations in the Great East Japan Earthquake and elsewhere; and the changes in the policy environment, including the establishment of the National Security Council.

(1) In order to foster a sense of unity among civilian officials and uniformed personnel, permanent posts will be established for uniformed personnel in the Internal Bureau and for civilian officials in each of the Staff Offices and major commands.

(2) In order to eliminate defense capabilities build-up based on individual, vertically-divided optimization for each GSDF, MSDF and ASDF, and to ensure that build-up is instead conducted based on total optimization, a procedure will be established for defense capabilities build-up based on the joint operations. In combination with this, equipment acquisition will be streamlined and optimized by means of management of equipment throughout its life cycle, and also organizational reform will be conducted in order to contribute to the overall optimization of defense capabilities.

(3) In order to ensure the accuracy of decision-making relating to the operations of the SDF and to make the process swifter, a review of the organization will be conducted so that affairs concerning actual operations will be unified into the Joint Staff.

(4) Policy-planning functions will be enhanced in response to the rapid increase in international affairs-related work and the establishment of the National Security Council. In addition, public relations capability will also be strengthened.

Furthermore, it is also stated as important to establish a series of truly effective reforms by avoiding stagnation and confusion in operations, and seeking changes in the mentality of both civilian officials and uniformed personnel through steady and phased implementation while the Internal Bureau and the Staff Offices equally support the Minister of Defense.

Specific Initiatives

In accordance with the “Direction of the MOD Reform,” the following initiatives have been implemented.

(1) Main Initiatives in FY2014

Along with the establishment of permanent posts for uniformed personnel in the Internal Bureau and new posts for civilian officials in the Joint Staff and the main units of each branch of the SDF, a Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs, who is responsible for the overall coordination of duties such as those related to international affairs, has been established.

(2) Main Initiatives in FY2015

a. Strengthening Integrated Operational Functions

- As work related to actual operations have been unified into the Joint Staff, the Bureau of Operational Policy has been abolished, and some of the functions of the Bureau, such as the planning and drafting of laws and regulations related to unit operations have been transferred to the Bureau of Defense Policy

- Two new posts for civilian officials – Administrative Vice Chief of Joint Staff (Vice-Chief of Joint Staff-level) and Joint Staff Councilor (department director general/division director-level) - have been established

b. Reorganization of the Internal Bureau, etc.

- Due to the reorganization related to the new establishment of the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA), the procurement and research and development functions for defense equipment, etc., over which the Bureau of Finance and Equipment, the Technical Research and Development Institute, and the Equipment Procurement and Construction Office had had jurisdiction, have been transferred to the ATLA. The departments in the Ground, Maritime, and Air Staff Offices that had conducted work related to equipment have been consolidated as the Logistics Planning Department

- The Strategic Planning Division has been established in the Bureau of Defense Policy in order to strengthen the policy planning function regarding defense strategies based on mid-to-long-term perspectives and new policy issues

- The Bureau of Defense Buildup Planning has been established in order to strengthen the defense capacities buildup function

c. The Establishment of the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency

The ATLA has been established as an extra-ministerial organization with the following four objectives, by bringing together and consolidating the departments of the MOD that had been related to equipment procurement, research and development (the Internal Bureau, the respective Staff Offices, the Technical Research and Development Institute, and the Equipment Procurement Office).

(1) Implementation of unified project management throughout the life cycle of equipment from a comprehensive perspective; (2) Smooth and prompt reflection of the
Section 2  Effective Deterrence and Response

In order to respond to a variety of contingencies in a timely and appropriate manner, and to assure the protection of the lives and property of the people as well as territorial land, water and airspace, it is necessary to make efforts to deter the occurrence of a variety of contingencies before they happen by building a comprehensive defense architecture. If a contingency does occur, it is required to respond seamlessly to the situations as they unfold.

Therefore, it is important to ensure information superiority through continuous surveillance over a wide region around Japan during peacetime. If a contingency does arise, ensuring maritime superiority and air superiority in our sea and airspace in a timely manner is important to respond effectively and minimize the damage.

1 Ensuring Security of Sea and Airspace Surrounding Japan

Japan is comprised of a little over 6,800 islands, and is surrounded by wide sea space, which includes the sixth largest Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the world. The Self-Defense Force (SDF) is engaged in persistent intelligence collection and warning and surveillance over Japan’s territorial waters and airspace during peacetime, as well as the surrounding sea and airspace.

Warning and Surveillance in Waters and Airspace Surrounding Japan

(1) Basic Concept
The SDF persistently engages in warning and surveillance activities in the waters and airspace surrounding Japan during peacetime so that it can respond to various contingencies immediately and seamlessly.

(2) Response by the Ministry of Defense (MOD)/the Self-Defense Forces (SDF)
The Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) patrols the waters surrounding Hokkaido, the Sea of Japan, and the East China Sea during peacetime, using P-3C patrol aircraft and other aircraft to monitor the numerous vessels that sail through those waters. The Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) uses radar sites at 28 locations nationwide, E-2C early warning aircraft, and E-767 early warning and control aircraft, amongst others, to carry out warning and surveillance activities over Japan and its surrounding airspace 24 hours a day. Warning and surveillance activities in major channels are also conducted 24 hours a day by MSDF guard posts, Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) coastal surveillance units, and so forth. Furthermore, warning and surveillance activities are carried out with the flexible use of destroyers and aircraft as required. Thus, the SDF maintains a defense and security posture so that it can respond quickly to various contingencies in areas surrounding Japan.

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1 To have an advantage over the opponent in terms of quickly and correctly identifying, collecting, processing, and conveying information.
2 Maritime superiority refers to the condition in which one side has a tactical advantage over the opposing force at sea and can carry out maritime operations without suffering substantial damages by the opposing force.
3 Air superiority refers to the condition in which one side can carry out airborne operations without suffering a significant level of obstruction by the opposing force.