Japan’s Security and Defense Policy and the Japan-U.S. Alliance

Part II

National Security Strategy

The “National Security Strategy” developed in December 2013 expresses Japan’s fundamental principle of national security, which is that Japan will continue to adhere to the course that it has taken to date as a peace-loving nation and to contribute even more proactively in securing the peace, stability and prosperity of the international community, while achieving its own security as well as peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, as a “Proactive Contributor to Peace” based on the principle of international cooperation.

In order to achieve this principle, the strategy defined Japan’s national security, such as the maintenance of sovereignty and independence, defending territorial integrity, ensuring the safety of life, person and properties of its nationals, economic development, and the maintenance and protection of the international order based on rules and universal values.

Based on that, the strategy clearly defines the security environment surrounding Japan and national security challenges, and specifies the strategic approaches centering on diplomatic and defense policies that Japan should implement, such as the establishment of a comprehensive defense architecture to protect Japan.

National Defense Program Guidelines

The “National Defense Program Guidelines” developed in December 2013 based on the National Security Strategy defines basic policies for Japan’s future defense, the role of its defense capabilities, and objectives for specific Self-Defense Force (SDF) equipment.

Japan’s Basic Defense Policy

The guideline specifies (1) Japan’s own efforts, (2) strengthening of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and (3) active promotion of security cooperation as the basic principles from the perspective of proactive contribution to peace based on international cooperation.

Building a Dynamic Joint Defense Force

To build a Dynamic Joint Defense Force, the MOD conducts capability assessments based on joint operations and builds a dynamic joint defense force, for the enhancement of deterrence and response capability by pursuing further joint operations, improving the mission-capable rate of equipment and its employment to conduct activities, as well as developing defense capabilities adequate both in quality and quantity that underpin various activities.

Role of the Defense Forces

- The following points will be emphasized as effective means of deterrence and response to various situations: (1) ensuring the security of the sea and airspace surrounding Japan; (2) response to an attack on remote islands; (3) response to ballistic missile attacks; (4) responses in outer space and cyberspace; and (5) responses to major disasters.
- Promoting training and exercises, defense cooperation and exchanges, securing of maritime security, international peace cooperation activities, and capacity building assistance in order to stabilize the Asia-Pacific region and to improve the global security environment.

Structure of the Self-Defense Forces

The “appendix” specifies the target levels of the main formation and equipment.

Foundation to Maximize Defense Capability

Also strengthen the foundations underpinning the defense force.
In 2016, based on the National Defense Program Guidelines and the Mid-Term Defense Program, and as the third year of their implementation, Japan is steadily carrying out defense development efforts to build up its defense capability. Japan will improve its defense capabilities in order to seamlessly and dynamically fulfill its defense responsibilities, which include (1) providing an effective deterrence and response to a variety of security situations, and (2) supporting stability in the Asia-Pacific region.
With the security environment surrounding Japan becoming increasingly severe, the Legislation for Peace and Security has historical significance in further ensuring the peace and security of Japan through enhancing the deterrence and making contributions to the peace and stability of the region and the international community more proactively than ever before, and has been highly rated and supported by many countries and organizations in the world.

Revision of the Self-Defense Forces Law
- Establishment of the provisions for measures to rescue Japanese nationals overseas — in addition to the existing mission of “transportation of Japanese nationals and others overseas,” “rescue measures,” including guarding and rescue of Japanese nationals and others overseas, became possible.
- Establishment of the provisions for the protection of weapons and other equipment of the units of the U.S. Armed Forces and armed forces of other foreign countries — Enable SDF personnel to protect the weapons and other equipment of the units of the U.S. Armed Forces and armed forces of other foreign countries that are, in cooperation with the SDF, currently engaged in activities that contribute to the defense of Japan.
- Expansion of the provision of supplies and services to the U.S. Armed Forces — Expand the range of scenes where the provision of supplies and services is possible as well as the scope of supplies and services available.

Law Concerning Measures to Ensure Peace and Security of Japan in Situations that Will Have an Important Influence on Japan’s Peace and Security (Revision of the Law Concerning Measures to Ensure Peace and Security of Japan in Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan)
- The names of situations that will have an important influence on Japan’s peace and security has been changed from “situations in areas surrounding Japan” to “situations that will have an important influence.”
- “Armed forces of other foreign countries engaged in activities contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the U.N. Charter," etc. were added as the armed forces, etc. responding to situations that will have an important influence on Japan’s peace and security subject to Japan’s support. The law revision expanded the types of supplies and services the SDF can provide in situations that will have an important influence on Japan’s peace and security and also set forth the measures to avoid integration with the use of force by a foreign country.

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Revision of the Act for Establishment of the National Security Council

- Responses to “Survived-Threatening Situation,” “situations that will have an important influence on Japan’s peace and security” and “situations threatening international peace and security that the international community is collectively addressing” were added as the items for deliberation.

- “Rescue measures for Japanese nationals and others overseas,” and “decisions on and changes in implementation plans for the implementation of safety-ensuring operations or “kaketsuke-keigo” operations” were added as the items the National Security Council must deliberate without fail.

*1 A situation where an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs and as a result threatens Japan’s survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn the people’s right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness

*2 Situations that threaten peace and security of the international community, and the international community is collectively addressing the situations in accordance with the objectives of the U.N. Charter to remove the threat, and Japan, as a member of the international community, needs to independently and proactively contribute to these activities

Key Points regarding the Legislation for Peace and Security

- Amendment to the International Peace Cooperation Act
  - “Internationally coordinated operations for peace and security” (humanitarian relief support and safety-ensuring tasks not under the control of the United Nations) were added as operations Japan can participate in. In addition to the satisfaction of the Five Principles for Participation, Japan can participate in these operations based on U.N. resolutions or at the request of the United Nations, or other prescribed organizations.
  - The so-called “safety-ensuring operations” and the so-called “kaketsuke-keigo” operations, etc. were added as tasks in U.N. peacekeeping operations, etc., and the authority to use weapons was also reviewed. Prior Diet approval is required, in principle, for the “safety-ensuring operations.”

- Revision of the Legislation for Responses to Armed Attack Situations
  - “Survived-Threatening Situation” was newly added to the situations to which Japan has to respond under the Armed Attack Situations Response Act.
  - Necessary revisions were made to relevant laws to make it possible to issue an order for defense operations to respond to a “Survived-Threatening Situation” for the SDF’s primary mission of the defense of Japan, and also to require prior Diet approval for this, in principle, in the same manner as for defense operations in the case of the armed attack situations, etc.

Enactment of the International Peace Support Act (New)

- The International Peace Support Act is a newly enacted law that enables Japan to conduct cooperation and support operations, search and rescue operations and ship inspection operations for the armed forces of foreign countries engaged in operations for peace and security of the international community in situations threatening the international peace and security that the international community is collectively addressing(2). The Act also sets forth measures in order to avoid “integration” with the use of force by a foreign country, such as those not allowing the SDF to conduct support activities “in the scene where no combat operations are conducted at that time” in situations threatening the international peace and security that the international community is collectively addressing.

- Prior Diet approval is required without exception, and re-approval is necessary in the case of a lapse of more than two years since the commencement of the response measures.
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Outline of the New Guidelines

- Defense Cooperation and the Objectives of the Guidelines
  The new Guidelines newly specified the matters to be emphasized in security and defense cooperation. The objectives of the new Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation are retained in line with the approach of the 1997 Guidelines.

- Strengthened Alliance Coordination
  Establishment of the Alliance Coordination Mechanism to be utilized from peacetime; development and update of bilateral plan.

- Seamlessly Ensuring Japan’s Peace and Security
  The new Guidelines present directions for achieving “seamless” cooperation, from peacetime to contingencies.

- Cooperation for Regional and Global Peace and Security
  The new Guidelines set forth specific forms of Japan-U.S. cooperation for regional and global peace and security.

- Outer Space and Cyberspace Cooperation
  The new Guidelines newly incorporate cooperation in outer space and cyberspace.

- Bilateral Enterprise
  The new Guidelines, in order to enhance the effectiveness of bilateral cooperation, newly incorporate initiatives in the three areas of defense equipment and technology cooperation, intelligence cooperation and information security, and educational and research exchanges that serve as the foundation of security and defense cooperation.

- Procedures for the Review
  The new Guidelines newly incorporate the implementation of the regular evaluation.

Initiatives to Build the Foundation for Strengthening the Alliance

- Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting
  The Japan–U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting (June 4, 2016)
  - Regarding the arrest of a member of the civilian component in Okinawa, the Ministers confirmed their intent to continue to work closely together to devise a set of effective prevention measures, including the review of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) implementation practices related to U.S. personnel with SOFA status, including the civilian component.
  - The Ministers agreed that they oppose unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force in the East China Sea and the South China Sea.
  - In light of the developments regarding North Korea, the Ministers agreed to maintain close Japan-U.S. cooperation.
  - The Ministers affirmed their intent to continue efforts to ensure the effectiveness of the new Guidelines.
  - The Ministers agreed to further deepen bilateral cooperation for defense equipment and technology.
  - The Ministers agreed to continue to cooperate in mitigating the impact on Okinawa.
Major Initiatives for Strengthening the Alliance

- In order to respond to the increasingly severe security environment, Japan and the United States will establish a seamless cooperation structure in all phases from peacetime to contingencies, including cooperation in “gray zone” situations, while enhancing the Japanese and U.S. presence in the Western Pacific. The two countries are continuing to promote the expansion of joint training and exercises as well as joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) activities, and also the expansion of the joint use of facilities and areas of both countries that serve as the bases for these activities.
- In November 2015, based on the new Guidelines, the two governments established the Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM) that enables bilateral information sharing and coordination at various levels from peacetime, and upgraded the Bilateral Planning Mechanism (BPM) for the development and update of bilateral plans.

Significance of the Presence of the U.S. Forces in Japan

For the Japan-U.S. Alliance to adequately function as a deterrence that contributes to Japan’s defense as well as to the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region, it is necessary to secure the presence of the U.S. Forces in Japan and to maintain a posture to respond swiftly and expeditiously to emergencies. For this purpose, based on the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, Japan allows the stationing of the U.S. Forces in Japan, which is a core part of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements.

Host Nation Support (HNS)

The Government of Japan, while paying adequate attention to its tight fiscal conditions, has been providing HNS from the perspective that HNS is of extreme importance in supporting the smooth and effective operation of the U.S. Forces in Japan. In April 2016, the new Special Measures Agreement (SMA) related to HNS took effect.

Realignment of the U.S. Forces in Japan

Realignment of the U.S. Forces in Japan is extremely important in mitigating the impact on local communities, such as those in Okinawa, while maintaining the deterrence capabilities of the U.S. Forces. The MOD plans to proceed with the U.S. Forces realignment and other initiatives while making continuous efforts to gain understanding and cooperation from local communities accommodating facilities and areas of the U.S. Forces in Japan.

Stationing of the U.S. Forces in Okinawa

- The relocation of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma to the Camp Schwab Henokosaki area (Nago City) is the only solution to avoid the continued use of MCAS Futenma while maintaining the deterrence capabilities of the U.S. Forces in Japan, and will fully contribute to mitigating the impact on Okinawa. The return of MCAS Futenma is also expected to be followed by further growth of Okinawa through the reuse of the area. Thus, the Government of Japan is making all-out efforts to realize the relocation of MCAS Futenma.
- In December 2015, the Governments of Japan and the United States agreed on an early return of part of the land of MCAS Futenma as well as on an early return of part of the land of Makiminato Service Area.
- Through the Consultation between the Central Government and Okinawa Prefecture, established in January 2016 to discuss ways to mitigate the impact on Okinawa and further develop Okinawa, the Government of Japan is holding discussions with Okinawa prefectural government on the relocation and return of MCAS Futenma and the early return of a major portion of Northern Training Area. As part of its initiatives to mitigate the impact on Okinawa in a tangible manner, the Government of Japan is also addressing issues such as the return of land areas south of Kadena Air Base, the reduction of U.S. troops stationed in Okinawa and its relocation to Guam and the training relocation of MV-22 Osprey aircraft.

Stationing of the U.S. Forces in Regions Other than Okinawa

In regions other than Okinawa, the MOD is implementing measures to consolidate facilities and areas of the U.S. Forces in Japan and to proceed with the realignment of the U.S. Forces in Japan. Such measures are aimed at securing the stable presence of the U.S. Forces while maintaining its deterrence abilities and trying to mitigate the impact on local communities.

Initiatives toward Prevention of Incidents and Accidents Caused by U.S. Forces Personnel