The security environment surrounding Japan has grown increasingly severe, and a variety of situations have occurred to threaten the peace, security and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region as well as the entire international community. On the other hand, given the rapid advance in globalization, no single country can defend its own security by itself any longer. In order to resolutely secure the lives and peaceful livelihood of its people under any situation and contribute even more proactively to the peace and stability of the international community, the Legislation for Peace and Security, which enables seamless responses, is essential.

Therefore, the Government submitted two bills related to the Legislation for Peace and Security to an ordinary session of the Diet in 2015. After a total of about 216 hours of debate at the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors, the two bills were enacted on September 19, 2015, and put into force on March 29, 2016.

Going forward, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) / the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) will appropriately fulfill its duties and continue to make thoroughgoing preparations in all ways possible while securing the safety of uniformed SDF personnel and meticulously conducting verification efforts, as well as education and training.
On October 1, 2015, ATLA was established as an extra-ministerial organization, by bringing together and consolidating equipment procurement related departments regarding procurement, research and development in the Ministry of Defense (MOD). This has been implemented as a part of MOD reform along with the integration of duties related to actual unit operations into the Joint Staff.

ATLA has been established to aim at: (1) implementation of unified project management throughout the life cycle from an integrative perspective; (2) smooth and prompt reflection of the operational needs of units to the equipment to be procured; (3) active engagement in new areas (such as further internationalization of defense equipment and investment in cutting edge technology research); and (4) simultaneous achievement of acquisition reform and maintaining and strengthening defense production and technological bases.

Currently, ATLA actively promotes various measures such as research and development (R&D) for ensuring technological superiority including the R&D on the Advanced Technology Demonstrator (X-2), project management with respect to equipment subject to a focus, and defense equipment and technology cooperation with other countries.

Establishment of the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA)

The first flight of the Advanced Technology Demonstrator (X-2) (April 2016)

Minister of Defense Nakatani and Commissioner of ATLA Watanabe setting up the doorplate of the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency

The logo of ATLA
Since the beginning of 2016, North Korea has repeatedly conducted provocations, such as its fourth nuclear test in January 2016 and repeated launches of ballistic missiles since February including the launch of a ballistic missile disguised as a "satellite."

The MOD/SDF, in close coordination with the relevant ministries and agencies and countries such as the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK), is taking all possible measures to ensure the peace and security of Japan, which include the collection and analysis of necessary information related to North Korea’s activities, surveillance of such activities, and mobilization and deployment of Aegis destroyers and PAC-3 units.

Aegis destroyer being deployed

T-4 taking off to conduct a radiation survey

PAC-3 unit deployed to Ishigaki Island
The Kanto-Tohoku Heavy Rainfall Disaster in September 2015

During the Kanto-Tohoku Heavy Rainfall Disaster in September 2015, caused heavy rain and associated large scale damage mainly in the northern Kanto region and the southern Tohoku region. In particular, in Ibaraki, Tochigi, and Miyagi Prefectures, enormous damage occurred due to the collapse of the river embankment, overtopping, and water leakage.

Responding to the disaster relief dispatch request from the Governors of the three prefectures mentioned above, the MOD/SDF sent approximately 7,540 personnel (accumulated number) to conduct rescue operations of isolated individuals and other operations. Particularly, in Joso City and its surrounding areas where extended areas were flooded due to the overflow from the Kinugawa River, evacuation assistance using boats, flood control activities using sandbags, water supply activities, bathing service assistance, and epidemic control operations were conducted, in addition to the rescue operation of isolated individuals.

The 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake

During the Kumamoto Earthquake in April 2016, in addition to the major earthquake with an epicenter in the Kumamoto region in Kumamoto Prefecture (maximum M7.3), a total of over 1,600 earthquakes (larger than intensity of 1) occurred centering around Kumamoto Prefecture and Oita Prefecture. The Kumamoto Earthquake caused enormous damage to the affected areas, including the collapse of buildings and facilities and the destruction of transportation infrastructure and lifelines.

Responding to the disaster relief dispatch request from the Governors of Kumamoto and Oita Prefectures, the MOD/SDF conducted lifesaving operations and livelihood support for the victims (transportation of goods, provision of food and water, bathing services, and emergency medical support) by forming a GSDF, MSDF and ASDF joint task force and deploying approximately 814,000 personnel (accumulated number). In this mission, SDF Ready Reserve Personnel were also called to carry out the livelihood support.
In light of the “Proactive Contribution to Peace” based on the principle of international cooperation, the MOD/SDF has implemented approximately 40 international peace cooperation activities globally such as in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Central America, and dispatched approximately 55,000 SDF personnel (accumulated number). Currently, Japan continues to dispatch SDF units to the counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden as well as to UNMISS, and actively contributes to the peace and stability of international community in cooperation with other countries.

Counter-Piracy Operations Off the Coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden

For Japan, which depends on maritime transportation to import most of the resources and food as a maritime nation, it is crucial to ensure the safety of maritime traffic. For this reason, Japan dispatches destroyers and P-3C fixed wing patrol aircraft, and carries out warning and surveillance activities as well as escorting navigating vessels, based on the Anti-Piracy Measures Act enacted in July 2009. These measures are taken in order to deter piracy off the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden as well as ensuring the safety of the navigation of ships from various countries including Japan.

(As of June 2016, two destroyers and two P-3C fixed wing patrol aircraft are being dispatched)

United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)

Peace and stability in South Sudan, which gained its independence in July 2011, is very important for the stability of Africa, and it is a crucial issue to be handled by the international community. Responding to the dispatch request from the United Nations to UNMISS, Japan has dispatched engineering units and staff officers since November 2011 to contribute to the peace and stability of the country by carrying out the development of infrastructure such as roads and the shelters of internally displaced persons.

(As of June 2016, approximately 350 personnel are dispatched as engineering unit and staff officers)
In October 2015, the SDF fleet review was held by the MSDF at Sagami Bay (Kanagawa Prefecture), which attracted approximately 34,000 visitors, including visitors who attended the review and the rehearsal. Naval vessels from the naval forces of various countries including the United States, Australia, France, India, and the ROK participated in the fleet review. Together with these participating vessels, the Japan-Australia joint exercise and the Japan-ROK search and rescue joint exercise were carried out.

The aim of a fleet review is to raise the morale of SDF units and personnel with the Prime Minister, the supreme commander of the SDF, in attendance. Simultaneously, it also aims to deepen the understanding and trust of the people regarding the SDF and serves as an opportunity to promote international goodwill and defense exchanges.

A troop review, a fleet review, and an air review are hosted annually in rotation by the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF respectively. In 2016, the GSDF troop review will be conducted.

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