

## Section 2 Asia Pacific Security Environment

The Asia-Pacific is a unique region with a concentration of large-scale military forces. Recently, the shift in the global balance of power stemming from the increase in power of China and other nations is having an acute impact on military trends in the region. Under this situation, countries in the region have made efforts to enhance and strengthen specific and practical intra-regional coordination and collaboration with a particular focus on non-traditional security fields such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. On the other hand, this region abounds in political, economic, ethnic, and religious diversity. Also, views on security and perceptions of threats are different by country. Therefore, a regional cooperation framework in the security realm has not been sufficiently institutionalized, and longstanding issues of territorial rights and reunification continue to remain in the region.

In the Korean Peninsula, the Korean people have been divided for more than half a century, and the faceoff continues between the military forces of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and North Korea. There are issues concerning Taiwan and the South China Sea. Furthermore, with regard to Japan, territorial disputes over the Northern Territories and Takeshima, both of which are inherent parts of the territory of Japan, remain unresolved.

On top of this, recent years have seen a continued tendency towards the prolongation of “gray-zone” situations, raising concerns that they may develop into more serious situations in the absence of a clear path towards the resolution of the situations.

In North Korea, it is deemed that following the change of regime that made Chairman of the State Affairs Commission Kim Jong-un the leader of the country, the regime continues to strengthen and tighten its grip to make Chairman Kim Jong-un the sole leader. North Korea is military-focused and deploys a massive military force. It is also furthering its development, deployment, transfer, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, and it maintains a large-scale special operations force. Through these activities, North Korea continues to maintain and strengthen asymmetrical military capabilities.<sup>1</sup> In particular, it is regarded that North Korea has further advanced its entire ballistic missile program,

including new ballistic missiles, through technological verification conducted by launching a series of ballistic missiles. Recently, North Korea has not only engaged in research and development of ballistic missiles, but has also intensified activities to increase their operational capabilities, including surprise attack. North Korea has conducted nuclear tests in defiance of calls of restraint from the international community, and is believed to be seeking to acquire hydrogen bombs to further enhance its nuclear forces. Considering the technological maturity reached through the past five nuclear tests, it is possible that North Korea has successfully miniaturized nuclear weapons for warheads and enabled them to be equipped on ballistic missiles. With the passage of time, there will likely be a growing risk that North Korea would deploy ballistic missiles mounted with a nuclear warhead that have ranges covering Japan. North Korea has repeated provocative rhetoric and behavior against related countries including Japan. In 2013, North Korea emphasized that Japan is within the range of its missiles, referring to specific Japanese cities, and in March 2017, North Korea announced that it had launched a ballistic missile by “units tasked to strike the bases of the U.S. military forces in Japan.” Such North Korean military trends constitute a serious and imminent threat to the security not only of Japan but also of the entire region and the international community, and furthermore, the threat from North Korea’s improved capabilities in the development and use of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles has entered a new stage. North Korea’s abduction of Japanese nationals, a grave issue concerning the sovereignty of Japan and the lives and security of the Japanese people, is yet to be resolved. A solution will require concrete actions by North Korea.

Today, China has significant influence in the international community. Accordingly, there continues to be strong expectations on China to recognize its responsibility in the international community, accept and comply with international norms, and play an active role in a more cooperative manner in regional and global issues. In the meantime, China has been continuously increasing its defense budget at a high level, and has been rapidly reinforcing its military capabilities in a wide range of areas, without sufficient transparency. In particular,

<sup>1</sup> Asymmetrical military capabilities, in this context, refer to means of attack different from those of an opponent with superior conventional military capabilities. Such measures are exploited to compensate for disadvantages in conventional weapons and troops. Examples include WMDs, ballistic missiles, terrorism, and cyber attacks.

China is believed to be making efforts to strengthen its asymmetrical military capabilities to prevent military activities by other countries in the region, denying access and deployment of foreign militaries to its surrounding areas (“Anti-Access/Area-Denial” [“A2/AD”] capabilities), and recently, pursuing large-scale military reforms designed to build its joint operations structure with actual combat in mind. In addition, China is rapidly expanding and intensifying its activities both in quality and quantity in the maritime and aerial domains in the region, including in the East and South China Seas. In particular, China has continued to take assertive actions with regard to issues of conflicts of interest in the maritime domain, as exemplified by its attempts to change the status quo by coercion, and has signaled its position to realize its unilateral assertions without making any compromises. As for the seas and airspace around Japan, Chinese government ships have routinely and repeatedly intruded into Japan’s territorial waters, and China has engaged in dangerous activities that could cause unintended consequences, such as its naval vessel’s direction of fire control radar at a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) destroyer, the flight of fighters abnormally close to SDF aircraft, and its announcement of establishing the “East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ)” based on its own assertion, thereby infringing the freedom of overflight. In the South China Sea, China has continued to take unilateral actions that change the status quo and heighten tension, including large-scale and rapid reclamation of multiple features, establishment of outposts there, and their use for military purposes, based on China’s unique assertions which are incompatible with the existing international order, and has made steady efforts to create a fait accompli. In addition, a Chinese fighter is alleged to have flown abnormally close to and conducted an intercept of a U.S. Forces aircraft. These Chinese activities represent serious security concerns of the region encompassing Japan, and of the international community. For this reason, China is urged to further increase transparency regarding its military and enhance its compliance with international norms. It is a key task to further strengthen mutual understanding and trust by promoting dialogue and exchanges with China, and make further progress on measures to build trust, such as measures to avoid and prevent unintended consequences in the maritime domain.

Russia, while perceiving the buildup of an affluent nation as its task for the present, attaches importance to becoming an influential power in a multipolarizing world, based on the deployment of its new economic, cultural, and military might. Russia has promoted the

strengthening of the readiness of its Armed Forces and the development and acquisition of new equipment, while continuing to give priority to its nuclear force. Recently, a confrontational relationship has developed between Russia and such countries as the United States and European nations over Ukraine which Russia deems is part of its sphere of influence. Meanwhile, Russia took actions intended to expand its international influence, including military interventions in Syria. Even as expenditure cuts are thus made in a wide range of areas, Russia has striven to secure defense spending with priority and has continued to modernize its Armed Forces. Recently, Russia has intensified its military activities not only in the Asia-Pacific region, but also in the Arctic, Europe, the periphery of mainland United States, and the Middle East, and has been expanding the area of activities. In the Far East, the Russian Armed Forces have conducted large-scale exercises. Russia has unveiled the deployment of coastal (surface-to-ship) missiles in the Northern Territories and a plan to deploy a division to the Northern Territories or the Chishima Islands, and thus continued attention needs to be paid to Russian military movements in the Far East, including the Four Northern Islands. Furthermore, Russia’s changing of the status quo by force or coercion in Ukraine has heightened the threat of Russian “hybrid warfare,” especially in Europe, and is perceived as a global issue that could affect the entire international community, including Asia.

As seen above, in the Asia-Pacific region, where the security environment has increasingly grown severe, the presence of the U.S. Forces remains extremely important in order to achieve regional stability. Accordingly, Japan and other countries, such as Australia and the ROK, have established bilateral alliances and partnerships with the United States, and allow the stationing and rotational deployment of the U.S. Forces in their territories. In addition, the U.S. Forces have recently taken measures to further strengthen their presence. In regard to the responses to the unilateral changes in the status quo by force or coercion based on unique assertions, it is



### “Anti-Access/Area-Denial” [“A2/AD”] capabilities

Anti-Access (A2) is a concept introduced by the United States. It refers to capabilities, usually long-range, designed to prevent an opposing force from entering an operational area. Area-Denial (AD) refers to capabilities, usually of shorter range, designed to limit an opposing force’s freedom of action within the operational area. Weapons used for A2/AD include ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, anti-satellite weapons, air-defense systems, submarines, and mines.

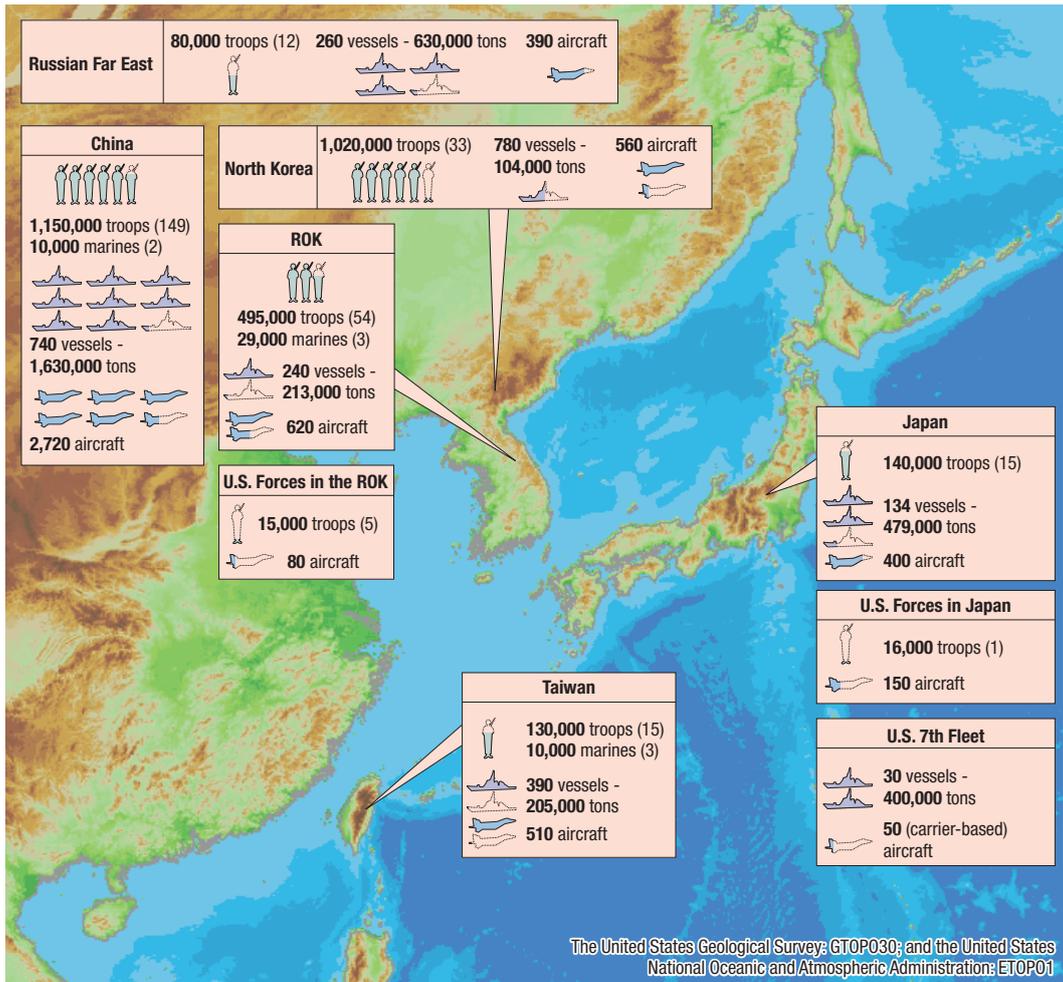
important for the international community centered around countries in the region to make concerted efforts to protect the existing international order based on law.

**See** Fig. I-1-2-1 (Major Military Forces in the Asia-Pacific Region (Approximate Strength))

Opportunities for bilateral defense exchanges between countries in the region have increased in recent years. Multilateral security dialogues, including

the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM Plus), conferences hosted by nongovernmental institutions with the participation of relevant defense ministers, and bilateral and multilateral joint exercises are held. Promoting and developing such multilayered approaches among countries is also important to ensure stability in the region.

Fig. I-1-2-1 Major Military Forces in the Asia-Pacific Region (Approximate Strength)



- Notes: 1. Source: "The Military Balance 2017," documents published by the U.S. DoD, etc.  
 2. Figures for Japan indicate the strength of each SDF as of the end of 2016; the number of combat aircraft is the sum of ASDF aircraft (excluding transport aircraft) and MSDF aircraft (fixed-wing aircraft only).  
 3. Figures for the U.S. ground forces in Japan and the ROK are those of the Army and Marine Corps personnel combined.  
 4. Combat aircraft include Navy and Marine aircraft.  
 5. Figures in parentheses show the total number of central units, such as divisions and brigades. That of North Korea shows only divisions. That of Taiwan includes military police as well.  
 6. The number of U.S. 7th Fleet vessels and aircraft indicates those which are forward-deployed in Japan and Guam.  
 7. Figures of combat aircraft of the U.S. Forces, Japan and the U.S. 7th Fleet include only fighters.

Legend

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|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Ground forces (200,000 troops) | Naval vessels (200,000 tons) | Combat aircraft (500 aircraft) |
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