In situations where international cooperation in the security and defense areas is required, and from the perspective of “Proactive Contribution to Peace” based on the principle of international cooperation, the MOD/SDF is required to actively contribute to the security of Japan as well as the peace and stability of the region. Furthermore, active contribution of the MOD/SDF is also necessary in ensuring the peace, stability, and prosperity of the entire international community. Specifically, Japan plans to enhance bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation and exchanges, and more actively promote the United Nations Peace Keeping Operations (UN PKO), counter-piracy operations, international peace cooperation activities, and other relevant missions as avenues to address global security issues.

Section 1 Towards Strategic International Defense Cooperation

1 Significance and Evolution of Security Cooperation and Dialogue and Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Amid the ongoing change in the region, which comprises the balance of power at the global level, peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region is important not only for the security of Japan, but increasingly across the international community. While some nations possess large-scale military power over the region, a framework for regional security cooperation has not yet been sufficiently institutionalized. Also, due to the political, economic and social systems of the countries, visions of security vary from country to country. Furthermore, there have been an increasing number of cases of unilateral actions in an attempt to change the status quo by coercion without paying respect to existing international law. The issues involving the South China Sea, in particular, cause concerns over the maintenance of the rule of law at sea, freedom of navigation and overflight, and stability in the Southeast Asian region. Thus, responses to these issues have become an important challenge in terms of ensuring the regional stability. For such a situation, strategic international cooperation, which promotes bilateral and multilateral security cooperation and exchanges more strategically and effectively, is necessary. The need for such cooperation is increasing in order to build trust between the relevant countries and establish a foundation on which each country works in cooperation to resolve shared regional security issues.

Regarding the form of defense cooperation and exchanges, Japan has long strived to alleviate any conditions of confrontation and tension, as well as fostering a collaborative and cooperative atmosphere by building face-to-face relationships through bilateral dialogues and exchanges. In addition, recognizing the increasing need for international cooperation, Japan has recently enhanced bilateral defense relationships from traditional exchanges to deeper cooperation in a phased manner by appropriately combining various means including joint exercises and capacity building assistance, defense equipment and technology cooperation, and establishing institutional frameworks such as the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreements (ACSA).

In addition, multilateral security cooperation and dialogue in the region are in the process of evolving from that focused on dialogue, to cooperation that seeks to build order in the region. It is important to promote bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation and exchanges in a multi-layered and practical manner, leading to the improvement of regional and global security environment.

1 On December 16, 2015, at the Meeting of the Ministry of Defense and SDF Senior Personnel, Prime Minister Abe said, “I would like you to advance strategic international defense cooperation, boldly and without being caught up in existing ideas. By doing this, I would like you to play a part in the strategic foreign and security policies that I develop by taking a panoramic perspective of the globe.”
Initiatives under the multilateral framework such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting (ADMM)-Plus and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which is a security cooperation framework in the Asia-Pacific region, have made steady progress and serve as an important foundation for cooperation and exchange in the areas of security and defense. Japan has contributed to the enhancement of multilateral cooperation in the region, for example, by annually holding the Japan-ASEAN Defense Vice-Ministerial Forum and the Tokyo Defense Forum.

Administrative Vice-Minister of Defense Kuroe paying a courtesy call on General Chaichan, Permanent Secretary for Defense of Thailand

Fig. III-2-1-1 (Major Achievements in High-Level Exchanges (June 2016 – June 2017))

Fig. III-2-1-2 (Security Dialogues and Defense Exchanges)

* “High-level” refers to Minister, State Minister, Parliamentary Vice-Minister, Administrative Vice-Minister, Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs, and the Chief of Staff of each SDF branch.

2 The ARF, a forum aimed at improving the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region through dialogue and cooperation on the political and security sectors, has been held since 1994. The ARF currently comprises 26 countries and 1 organization as members, and holds various inter-governmental meetings that are attended by both foreign affairs officials and defense officials to exchange opinions on the regional situation and security areas. The 26 countries consist of 10 ASEAN member states (Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia (since 1995) and Myanmar (since 1996), in addition to Japan, Australia, Canada, China and India (since 1996), New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Russia, the United States and Mongolia (since 1998), North Korea (since 2000), Pakistan (since 2004), Timor-Leste (since 2005), Bangladesh (since 2006), and Sri Lanka (since 2007), plus the European Union (EU).
### Security Dialogues and Defense Exchanges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Major initiatives</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Exchange between Defense Ministers and high-level officials</strong></td>
<td>Improving and reinforcing mutual trust and cooperation through frank exchanges of views on regional situations and national defense policies that are important common interests to both sides, as well as enhancing the following defense exchanges.</td>
<td>Dialogues and mutual visits between Japan’s Defense Minister and Defense Ministers from other countries; Dialogues and mutual visits between Japan’s State Minister of Defense, Parliamentary Vice-Minister, Administrative Vice-Minister, Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs, Chief of Joint Staff, Officers at the GSDF/MSDF/ASDF Chief level; Consultations between Director-General-level officials, Deputy Director-General-level officials, and their counterparts in foreign countries.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Regular consultation between defense officials</strong></td>
<td>Paving the way for high-level dialogues and exchanges through continuous and direct exchanges of views between national defense policy-makers, and contributing to the enhancement of mutual trust and cooperation between related countries.</td>
<td>Consultations between Director-General-level officials, Deputy Director-General-level officials, and their counterparts in foreign countries.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Exchange between units</strong></td>
<td>Contributing to the improvement and enhancement of mutual trust and cooperation between related countries through bilateral exercises and events for exchanges.</td>
<td>Personnel exchanges; Mutual visits to vessels of training squadrons and aircraft, and bilateral exercises for search and rescue operations.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Exchange of students</strong></td>
<td>In addition to the original educational purposes, deepening the understanding of the other countries’ defense policies and the situation of their defense units, as well as building mutual trust through the promotion of relatively long-term personnel exchange and establishing human networks.</td>
<td>Mutual acceptance of students; National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan National Defense Academy, GSDF/MSDF/ASDF Staff College, Joint Staff College; Dispatch of students to overseas military-related organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Research exchanges</strong></td>
<td>Deepening mutual understanding between researchers of both countries through frank exchange of opinions for the maintenance and promotion of defense exchanges.</td>
<td>Research exchanges between Japan’s National Institute for Defense Studies and military-related research organizations in other countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Security dialogue</strong></td>
<td>Deepening mutual understanding on the recognition of situations and on security policy among related countries as well as exchanging views and discussing on a wide range of multilateral issues.</td>
<td>Dialogues at the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF); Experts’ Working Groups (Maritime security, Military medicine, Counter-terrorism, Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, Peacekeeping operations, Humanitarian Mine Action, Cyber security; Multilateral dialogues sponsored by the Ministry of Defense Japan; Japan-ASEAN Defence Vice-Ministerial Forum; Tokyo Defense Forum; Multinational Cooperation Program in the Asia Pacific (MCAP); International Symposium on Security Affairs; Multinational Dialogues held by Defense Authorities; Asia-Pacific Chiefs of Defense Conference (CHOD); Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference (PACC); Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS); The Pacific Air Chiefs Symposium (PACS); Chief of Army’s Exercise (CAEX); Asia-Pacific Intelligence Chiefs Conference (APICC); Multilateral dialogues sponsored by private sectors; IISS Asia Security Summit (Shangri-La Dialogue); Regional Security Summit (Manama Dialogue); Munich Security Conference; Halifax International Security Forum; The Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD).</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Multilateral exercises and seminars</strong></td>
<td>Improving skills and contributing to enhancement of mutual trust and cooperation through multilateral exercises and seminars.</td>
<td>Personnel exchanges; Multilateral exercises and seminars related to disaster relief, minesweeping, and submarine rescue operations.</td>
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### Initiatives under the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) Framework

The countries of ASEAN hold the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting (ADMM), which is a ministerial level meeting between defense authorities in the ASEAN region, and the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), which contains an additional eight non-ASEAN member states including Japan to the members. The ADMM-Plus is the only official meeting for the defense ministers in the Asia-Pacific region including the countries outside the ASEAN region. Thus, the ADMM-Plus is highly significant from the perspective of encouraging the development and deepening of security and defense cooperation in the region, and the MOD/SDF is participating in and providing support for its initiatives. The following meetings and working groups have been established under the ministerial meetings in the ADMM-Plus: (1) ASEAN Defence Senior Officials’ Meeting (ADSMOM) Plus; (2) ADSOM-Plus Working Groups (ADSOM-Plus WG); and (3) Experts’ Working Groups (EWG).

Japan has also actively contributed to the activities of the EWGs. Japan and Singapore served as co-chairs...
of the EWG on Military Medicine from July 2011 until March 2014, while Japan and Laos served as co-chairs of the EWG on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief from July 2014 to March 2017. In the EWG on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, Japan conducted the following activities: (1) Specified issues which will have to be solved between the disaster-affected country and the assisting countries if they don’t have a specific agreement; (2) Prepared Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the Multi-National Coordination Center (MNCC) to amplify the effects of the activities by assisting foreign forces; and (3) Compiled a booklet of the best practices focusing on redeployment cases that provide clues on criteria to decide redeployment when conducting disaster relief activities.

The validity of the said SOP was verified through a command post exercise in the multilateral exercise called ADMM-Plus Military Medicine – Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Joint Exercise (AM-HEx 2016), co-hosted with the EWG on Military Medicine in Thailand in September 2016. Subsequently, it was adopted during the meeting of the EWG on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief in December 2016.

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ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

Regarding the ARF, which is engaged mainly by diplomatic authorities, in recent years, concrete efforts have been made for specific initiatives in non-traditional security areas such as disaster relief, maritime security, and peacekeeping and peace building, and the MOD is making active contributions to this forum as well. For example, in the maritime security field, an Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM on MS) has been held since 2009. At the ISM on MS, a collection of best practices concerning support for capacity building in the field of maritime security was formulated on the basis of a summary compiled by Japan. In the field of disaster relief, the MOD/SDF has dispatched SDF personnel and aircraft to participate in ARF Disaster Relief Exercises (ARF-DiREx) (conducted every two years) since 2009.

ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers’ Informal Meeting and the Vientiane Vision

(1) ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers’ Informal Meeting and the Vientiane Vision

Based on the proposal by Prime Minister Abe at the Japan-ASEAN Commemorative Summit in December 2013, the first ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers’ Informal Meeting took place in Myanmar in November 2014. This meeting, in which exchanges of opinions were conducted regarding cooperation in non-traditional security areas such as...
humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) and maritime security, was a breakthrough opportunity, bringing together defense ministers from Japan and the ASEAN member states for the first time in the nearly 50 years of friendship and cooperation between Japan and ASEAN. This marked an important first step towards strengthening defense cooperation in the future.

In November 2016, the second ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers’ Informal Meeting was held in Vientiane, Laos. In that meeting, Defense Minister Inada proposed Japan’s own initiative called the “Vientiane Vision: Japan’s Defense Cooperation Initiative with ASEAN” as a guideline for Japan-ASEAN defense cooperation, which was welcomed by all ASEAN member states.

The “Vientiane Vision” is the first of its kind to present, in a transparent manner, an overall picture of the priority areas of the future direction of ASEAN-wide defense cooperation. Specifically, in addition to defense cooperation with individual ASEAN member states, Japan will promote defense cooperation to contribute to ASEAN-wide capacity building by focusing on three points: (1) Consolidating the order based on the principles of international law; (2) Promoting maritime security; and (3) Coping with increasingly diversifying and complex security issues.

In December 2016, Japan established the Committee
for Japan-ASEAN Defense Cooperation, led by the Japanese State Minister of Defense, in order to promote practical defense cooperation based on the vision by combining various means such as: (1) promotion of international law; (2) capacity building cooperation; (3) defense equipment and technology cooperation; (4) joint training and exercises; and (5) human resource development and academic exchange.

Under this vision, Japan participated in a command post exercise of the U.S.-Philippines joint exercise Balikatan in May 2017. At the same time, Japan also participated in a medicine and construction program from the perspective of capacity building assistance for the first time and, together with Australia that was also participating in the exercise Balikatan, contributed to the improvement of the comprehensive HA/DR capabilities of the Philippines. Furthermore, Japan implemented the Japan-ASEAN Ship-Rider Cooperation Program on board the destroyer Izumo cruising at international waters surrounding Singapore in June 2017. This program consisted of a combination of navigation communication exercises and seminars on maritime security and HA/DR, and was conducted as the first Japan-ASEAN cooperation program. Japan also invited observers from all ASEAN member states to the Joint Exercise for Rescue for the first time and conducted various programs.

(2) Japan-ASEAN Defense Vice-Ministerial Forum
Since 2009, the MOD has annually held the Japan-ASEAN Defense Vice-Ministerial Forum, with the purpose of strengthening bilateral and multilateral relationships through establishing human networks between Japanese and ASEAN vice-ministerial level officials.

The 8th meeting was held in Sendai in September 2016, which was attended by the vice-ministerial level officials from ASEAN member states and the ASEAN Secretariat. Under the title of “To Improve Security Environment in the Region: Enhancement of Defense Cooperation between ASEAN and Japan,” participants exchanged opinions on the three themes of: (1) “Current regional security status”; (2) “United efforts to tackle common challenges”; and (3) “Future of Japan-ASEAN defense cooperation.” At the forum, participants confirmed the significance of cooperation in the region, including maritime security and the disaster relief fields in response to the increasingly complex security issues that are becoming difficult to deal with by a single country alone. At the same time, they also agreed on the importance of the rule of law and the peaceful resolution of disputes. On this basis, the participants concurred that cooperation contributing to capacity enhancement of ASEAN as a whole is important in order to deal with diverse security issues, in addition to cooperating with each ASEAN member state, and shared the view that they would further promote Japan-ASEAN defense cooperation in this direction.

(3) Tokyo Defense Forum, etc.
The MOD has held the Asia-Pacific Defense Forum (Tokyo Defense Forum) every year since 1996 with the participation of officers in charge of defense policy (Director-General level officials) from the countries in the region. At the forum, defense policies of the participating countries and confidence-building measures in the region are discussed.

The 21st Forum was held in March 2017 with the participation of 26 countries in total, consisting of France and the United Kingdom in addition to 24 countries from the Asia-Pacific region, as well as the ASEAN Secretariat, the European Union (EU), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). At this forum, a broad range of discussions took place on the topics of: (1) “Peacekeeping Operations: Upcoming Challenges and Ways to Cooperate Ahead”; and (2) "Domestic Challenges of Defense Authorities.”

In addition, since 2001, the MOD has invited to Japan key figures who are primarily involved in security policy from countries in the Asia-Pacific region, with the objective of promoting understanding of Japan’s security and defense policy as well as the current status of the SDF.
London in September 2016 and delivered a speech at the session on “Improving Peacekeeping—Women, Peace and Security.” State Minister of Defense Wakamiya also held bilateral meetings with defense ministers and others attending the meeting, and exchanged opinions on the regional situations, security policies and the UN peacekeeping operations. This meeting was a follow-up to the first and second Leaders’ Summit on Peacekeeping hosted by the United States in September 2014 and 2015, respectively, and defense ministers and others from approximately 80 countries and organizations participated in the meeting.

(2) International Conferences Hosted by Private Organizations

In the field of security, not only inter-governmental international conferences but also international conferences organized by private organizations are held in which various people such as government officials, scholars, and journalists participate, and such conferences provide a forum for sharing challenges and exchanging opinions on medium- to long-term security issues. The leading international conferences are the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Asia Security Summit (Shangri-La Dialogue) and the Munich Security Conference, one of the most prestigious meetings among the security meetings in Europe and the United States.

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6 This is a multilateral conference initiated by IISS, a private British think tank, in which defense ministers from various countries participate with the objective of discussing defense-related issues and regional defense cooperation. Since the first conference in 2002, it has been held in Singapore every year and is known as the Shangri-La Dialogue, from the name of the hotel at which it takes place.

7 One of the most prestigious international meetings in Europe and the United States hosted by private organizations, which has been held annually (usually in February) since 1962. Officials at the ministerial level from major European countries as well as the leaders, ministers, parliamentary members, and key executives of international organizations usually participate in this meeting.
(3) Inter-Service Branch Initiatives

In September 2016, the Chief of Joint Staff participated in the 19th Annual Chief of Defense Conference (CHOD), a meeting of the chiefs of staff from the countries in the Asia-Pacific region, in which the participants conduct free exchanges of opinions on the security of this region. The Chief of Joint Staff carried out bilateral talks with the Chiefs of Defense from 19 countries including the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia, out of the 29 participating countries, to nurture mutual trust and enhance security relations.

The GSDF Chief of Staff participated in the Chief of Army’s Exercise (CAEX) 2016, which takes place every two years and is hosted by the Australian Ground Forces, in September 2016. Through CAEX, the GSDF Chief of Staff exchanged a wide range of opinions regarding issues specific to ground-to-ground units in the region with the Chiefs of Ground Forces in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Chief of Staff of the MSDF attended the Japan-U.S.-U.K. Trilateral Maritime Talks, which was held for the first time in history in October 2016. In this meeting, the MSDF Chief of Staff, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the First Sea Lord of the Royal Navy gathered together and agreed that the naval forces of the three major maritime nations would cooperate with each other for the improvement of the maritime security environment that is undergoing fundamental changes. A joint message of the three countries was also issued to the world.

In October 2016, the ASDF invited nine Air Force Chiefs of Staff and Commanders from eight countries to hold the Air Force Forum in Japan (AFFJ). In this event, two-party talks with the ASDF Chief of Staff, a symposium, and a visit to Iruma Air Base involving an exhibition of Japanese equipment such as C-2 transport aircraft were carried out. Participants of the forum shared information regarding the overall security environment in the Asia-Pacific region, situational awareness, and relevant issues, and agreed to strengthen the relationship among the air forces of the participating countries through exchanging opinions on capacity building assistance as well as on defense equipment and technology cooperation. In addition, in May 2017, the ASDF Chief of Staff delivered a lecture on HA/DR at the Philippine Air Force’s Annual Air Force Symposium in the Philippines, shared information and strengthened relationships with the Commander of the 5th Air Force of the U.S. Air Force and the Chiefs of Air Staff from the ASEAN member states and others participating in the forum.

3 Promoting Capacity Building Assistance and Other Practical Multilateral Security Cooperation

The security environment surrounding Japan has become increasingly severe. As it is not possible for a country alone to maintain its peace and stability, it is indispensable for the international community to unite to resolve global issues. Under such a circumstance, capacity building assistance especially in the security and defense-related areas is increasingly becoming important. For this reason, defense authorities of Southeast Asian and other countries request the MOD to provide capacity building assistance and express expectation for cooperation at various opportunities such as international conferences and bilateral meetings. The MOD/SDF is working to further strengthen and deepen defense cooperation and

KeyWord: Capacity building assistance

Capacity building assistance is designed to proactively create stability within the region and improve the global security environment by enhancing the capacity of recipient countries through continuous human resource development and technical assistance in security and defense fields on a regular basis. In particular, in the security and defense fields such as HA/DR, disposal of landmines and unexploded ordnances, military medicine, maritime security, and UN peacekeeping operations, the MOD/SDF provides assistance to the armed forces and military-related organizations of other countries by utilizing their own capabilities.
exchanges by combining capacity building assistance and other practical and diverse means.

1 Proactive and Strategic Initiatives for Capacity Building Assistance

(1) Purpose of Implementing Capacity Building Assistance

Providing assistance for capacity building has the following objectives: (1) enabling recipient countries to contribute to improving the global security environment; (2) strengthening bilateral relationships with recipient countries; (3) strengthening the relationships with other supporting countries such as the United States and Australia; and (4) promoting Japan’s efforts to work proactively and independently to realize regional peace and stability, thereby gaining trust in the MOD/SDF, as well as Japan as a whole. In addition, these initiatives also facilitate the improvement of the SDF capabilities.

(2) Specific Activities

Through the capacity building assistance program, which was launched in 2012, Japan has provided assistance in various areas such as HA/DR, peacekeeping operations, maritime security, and international law to 12 countries mainly in the Asia-Pacific region.

The MOD/SDF’s activities consist of long-term dispatch programs and short-term dispatch programs. The long-term dispatch programs involve dispatching a team composed of defense officials, SDF personnel, and staff from NGOs for a long period in order to conduct large-scale and systematic human resource development, such as lectures and practical training. The short-term dispatch programs involve dispatching SDF personnel with relevant knowledge necessary to deliver specific lectures at seminars for a short period. In addition, as an invitation program, the MOD/SDF invites practitioners from the recipient country to Japan, providing opportunities for them to inspect SDF
training facilities and undergo training.

In the long-term programs, the MOD/SDF has provided technical assistance regarding engineering activities such as road construction in Mongolia, which builds on previous assistance, assistance for engineering activities in exercise HARII HAMUTUK in Timor-Leste hosted by the Australian Armed Forces, and assistance to the military band in Papua New Guinea, which will be serving as the chair of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 2018.

In the short-term dispatch programs, seminars were conducted on the following areas: aviation meteorology, international aviation law and underwater medicine in Myanmar; HA/DR in Laos; HA/DR, vessel diesel engine maintenance, assistance in a medical program in the U.S.-Philippines joint exercise (Exercise Balikatan) in the Philippines; aviation safety, aviation medicine, and air rescue in Vietnam; HA/DR in Malaysia and Timor-Leste; international maritime law in Indonesia; and aviation safety in Thailand. In addition, training in the civil engineering area and training for military band were conducted in Cambodia and Papua New Guinea, respectively.

In the invitation program, the following training have been implemented: HA/DR training for personnel from Myanmar and Timor-Leste; military music training for military band personnel from Papua New Guinea; oceanography training for personnel from Indonesia; aviation medicine training for personnel from Vietnam; and medical activities training for personnel from Kazakhstan, which is the first training offered for military personnel from Central Asia.

(3) Cooperation with Relevant Countries

In efforts to stabilize the regional security environment, cooperation with other supporting countries is essential. In particular, capacity building cooperation between...
Japan, the United States and Australia is considered to be a priority area of engagement.

In the joint statement of the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (SCC) of April 2015, it is stated that the two countries would strengthen their continued close coordination on cooperation including capacity building assistance to realize peace, stability and prosperity in the region. Furthermore, at the Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting in September 2016 and February 2017, the two ministers agreed to strengthen the involvement of the two countries in the situation surrounding the South China Sea through capacity building assistance programs, etc., as an initiative to contribute to the stability of the region.

As part of the Japan-Australia personnel exchange, the MOD has received officers from the Australian Department of Defence to its Capacity Building Assistance Office in International Policy Division three times from July to September 2013, from February 2015 to August 2016, and from August 2016 for 18 months (tentative), one officer in each period. Meanwhile, the MOD dispatched officers, to the Australian Department of Defence twice from July to September 2015, and from August 2016 for one year (tentative).

Furthermore, at the Japan-Australia Defense Ministerial Meeting in August 2016, the two ministers welcomed the progress in the Japan-Australia defense cooperation in a range of areas such as capacity building assistance, and agreed to continue developing a more robust cooperation.

In addition, at the Japan-Australia Summit Meeting in January 2017, the two leaders confirmed that they would instruct their defense ministers to pursue deeper defense cooperation through capacity building assistance among other measures in 2017. Accordingly, at the Japan-Australia Defense Ministerial Meeting in April 2017, the two ministers agreed to launch a consultation mechanism between the defense authorities to further deepen Japan-Australia collaboration in capacity building assistance.

At the Japan-U.S.-Australia Defense Ministerial Meeting in May 2015, the three ministers agreed to advance continuous trilateral cooperation in the area of maritime security. Specific examples of cooperation include the participation of both the SDF and the U.S. Forces in the capacity building assistance program “HARII HAMUTUK” in Timor-Leste hosted by the Australian Defense Force twice in October 2015 and October 2016, and the provision of technical assistance in engineering and construction to the engineering unit of Timor-Leste Defense Force. Also in May 2013,
March 2015, and March 2016, experts from both the United States and Australia participated in a seminar on underwater medicine held in Vietnam.

Moreover, in the Joint Statement of the Japan-U.K. Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting (2+2) of January 2016, it is stated that the two countries would explore further coordination to enhance the capability of Southeast Asian countries, especially in maritime security, maritime safety, marine conservation, and cybersecurity. In the same month, the two countries jointly held a seminar on HA/DR in the Philippines for ASEAN member states. At the joint seminar, the MOD’s activities for international disaster relief and capacity building assistance were presented.

It is important to conduct capacity building assistance in an effective and efficient manner while closely coordinating and mutually complementing the programs of other countries that also implement similar assistance.

2 Pacific Partnership

The Pacific Partnership (PP), which started in 2007, is an initiative in which naval vessels, primarily those from the U.S. Navy, visit countries in the Asia-Pacific region to provide medical care, conduct facility repair activities, and engage in cultural exchange, as well as to strengthen collaboration with the participating countries and facilitate international peace cooperation activities, through cooperation with the government, military, international organizations, and NGOs in each of those countries.

Since 2007, Japan has dispatched SDF medical personnel, units, and other assets as part of this initiative. In 2016, SDF medical personnel, GSDF engineering personnel, and MSDF vessels were dispatched to Timor-Leste, Vietnam, Palau and Indonesia to conduct support activities. In 2017, Japan hosted a seminar on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in Sri Lanka, while SDF medical personnel, GSDF engineering personnel, and MSDF vessels were dispatched to Malaysia and Vietnam to conduct activities.

3 Multilateral Joint Training

(1) Significance of Multilateral Joint Training in the Asia-Pacific Region

In the Asia-Pacific region, the MOD/SDF has actively participated in multinational training in non-traditional security fields, such as HA/DR, as well as Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO), in addition to traditional training that had been conducted in preparation for combat situations. It is important to participate in such multilateral training exercises so as not only to raise the skill level of the SDF, but also to create a cooperative platform with the countries involved. In light of this perspective, the MOD/SDF intends to continue to actively engage in such training.

(2) Initiatives towards Multilateral Training

a. Participation in, and Hosting of, Multilateral Joint Training and Exercises

The SDF, coinciding with the visit of the French cruiser Jeanne d’Arc to Japan, participated in the Japan-France-U.K.-U.S. joint exercise carried out in the waters surrounding Japan as well as Guam and Tinian in May 2017.

Moreover, between January and February 2017, the SDF participated in the annual Cobra Gold exercise, a multilateral joint training exercise co-hosted by the United States and Thailand. The SDF engaged in command post exercises related to counter-piracy operations and cooperation assistance operations for foreign militaries, conducted field training for protecting Japanese nationals overseas, and also participated in the public health and construction activities of the humanitarian and civic assistance projects.

The MSDF participated in a multilateral maritime exercise hosted by the U.S. Navy (RIMPAC 2016) in Hawaii and the seas and airspace surrounding the U.S. West Coast area from June to August 2016 and the Royal Australian Navy-hosted multilateral naval exercise (Exercise Kakadu 2016) in the waters surrounding Darwin (Australia) in September 2016. Furthermore, MSDF destroyer Teruzuki participated in a multilateral exercise hosted by the Royal Malaysian Navy in March 2017, while MSDF destroyers Izumo and Sazanami
participated in a multilateral exercise hosted by the Republic of Singapore Navy in May of the same year.

In December 2016, the ASDF participated in the HA/DR joint training for Operation Christmas Drop in the Federated States of Micronesia and other countries, and in February 2017 co-hosted the Japan-U.S.-Australia joint exercise (Exercise Cope North Guam) and the Japan-U.S.-Australia joint exercise for HA/DR.

b. Multinational Tabletop Exercises, etc.

Initiatives have also been made to invite observers from other countries since September 2001, when observers from eight Asia-Pacific countries participated in the fourth Japan-Russia Search and Rescue training hosted by Japan.

In addition, the GSDF has hosted the Multinational Cooperation Program in the Asia Pacific (MCAP) every year since 2002 as part of its multilateral cooperative initiatives, inviting officers from the respective countries involved. In 2016, with participants from 22 countries and international organizations, the GSDF held group discussions on the theme of “the Role of Ground Forces in the Event of a Large-Scale Earthquake Disaster” and training on the disaster-affected areas in Kumamoto.

4 Promotion of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

In promoting cooperation and exchanges in the area of security, it is necessary to strengthen them based on a combination of the most optimal means, while also taking into account the actual situation of the partner countries and their relationship with Japan. Therefore, not only comprehensive efforts based on a multilateral framework but also bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges also play an important role to realize them.

1 Japan-Australia Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

(1) Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Australia

Australia is a special strategic partner for Japan in the Asia-Pacific region: both Japan and Australia are allied with the United States and share not only universal values but also strategic stakes and interests. In particular, in recent years, as responsible countries in the Asia-Pacific region, Japan and Australia are strengthening mutual cooperation focused primarily on areas such as HA/DR activities and cooperation with respect to capacity building assistance.

Defense cooperation between Japan and Australia started with the cooperation for the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The two countries have built up cooperation since then through the United Nations integrated Mission In Timor-Leste (UNMIT), Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq, and various international disaster relief operations. When the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred in March 2011, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) dispatched three out of four transport aircraft it owns to Japan to engage in a disaster relief mission. The
degree of cooperation between the two countries has been deepened and it is becoming more practical. For example, in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), Japan accepted two ADF personnel dispatched to engage in the UNMISS operations from January 2017 into the Japanese camp.

Against the background of the deepening defense cooperation between Japan and Australia, the two countries announced in 2007 the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, Japan’s first such joint declaration focusing on security with a country other than the United States. Japan and Australia have also developed the foundation for cooperation such as the Japan-Australia ACSA, the Japan-Australia Information Security Agreement, and the Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of Australia concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology.

Regarding the Japan-Australia ACSA, in January 2017, a new agreement for expanding the situations in which the provision of goods and services is possible was signed by the two countries, followed by the establishment of relevant laws and regulations. The new agreement was concluded in light of the expansion of cases in which the SDF and the ADF conduct operations together due to the further advances in their defense cooperation and exchanges, and the development of the Legislation for Peace and Security in Japan.

Japan will continue deepening its cooperation relationship with Australia, a “Special Strategic Partner,” which has both intention and ability to jointly contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region.

(2) Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

In August 2016, Defense Minister Inada held a defense ministerial meeting with Australian Minister for Defence Payne. This was her first ministerial meeting since taking office that invited a foreign defense minister to Tokyo. The two ministers exchanged opinions regarding the regional situations including the situations in North Korea and the East and South China Seas, welcomed the deepening of the Japan-Australia defense cooperation in a wide range of areas and at all levels through capacity building assistance, joint exercises, and unit exchanges, and agreed to develop a more robust defense cooperation between the two countries going forward.

In January 2017, Prime Minister Abe held the Japan-Australia Summit Meeting with Australian Prime Minister Turnbull when he visited Sydney, Australia. In this meeting, the two leaders reaffirmed that the “Special Strategic Partnership” between Japan and Australia had become stronger and more important than before, and agreed to further deepen the defense cooperation between the two countries in the areas of joint exercises and capacity building assistance. Also, in the presence of the two leaders, the new Japan-Australia ACSA was signed to facilitate mutual logistics support between the SDF and the ADF. Overall, the meeting generated positive results in a wide range of areas.

Meanwhile, the leaders expressed their expectations towards concluding negotiations on an agreement to reciprocally improve administrative, policy and legal procedures to facilitate joint operations and exercises between Japan and Australia, as early as possible, preferably in 2017.

Furthermore, at the Japan-Australia “2+2” Meeting held in Tokyo in April 2017, the two sides identified a series of new initiatives to further strengthen the defense cooperation between the two countries, including pursuing the implementation of a joint exercise in Japan in 2018 participated by fighter aircraft of the ASDF and the Royal Australian Air Force.

From July to August 2016, the ASDF participated in an observer program conducted at the same time as a multinational joint exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force, and in September an MSDF destroyer and aircraft participated in the Australian Navy-hosted Multinational Maritime Exercise. Moreover, the MSDF Chief of Staff and the ASDF Chief of Staff visited

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In addition to the activities this agreement currently applies to, the following activities and situations will also be newly subject to the agreement: (1) Internationally coordinated operations for peace and security; (2) Situations threatening international peace and security that the international community is collectively addressing; (3) Perilous situations; (4) Armed attack situations, etc.; (5) Activities in situations threatening survival; (6) Rescue measures for Japanese nationals and others overseas; (7) Counter-piracy activities; (8) Elimination of mines and other dangerous objects; and (9) Intelligence gathering activities.
Australia in January and February 2017, respectively, for meetings with their Australian counterparts in order to further enhance their mutual understanding and trust.

**Reference 53 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Australia (Past Three Years))**

(3) Cooperative Relationship between Japan, the United States, and Australia

Japan and Australia are both allied with the United States, and share universal values. They cooperate closely in order to resolve the various challenges the Asia-Pacific region and the international community are facing. In order to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of such cooperation, it is important to proactively promote trilateral cooperation with the United States, whose presence is indispensable for regional peace and stability.

The Security and Defense Cooperation Forum (SDCF), which is a Director General-level meeting among the three countries of Japan, the United States and Australia, has been held eight times since April 2007.

At the SDCF held in October 2016, the three countries signed a Trilateral Information Sharing Agreement, which will expedite the sharing of classified information for the cooperative activities regarding joint exercises and operations among the three countries. The utilization of this agreement is expected to further deepen the collaboration among the three countries.

Furthermore, at the Japan-U.S.-Australia Defense Ministerial Meeting on the margins of the 16th Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2017, the three ministers agreed to promote further development of the trilateral defense cooperation including joint exercises, operations, and capacity building assistance.

With regard to training and exercises, the ASDF participated in the Japan-Australia Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Joint Exercise (Operation Christmas Drop) in December 2016 and jointly held the Japan-U.S.-Australia joint exercise (Exercise Corp North Guam) in February 2017, while the GSDF participated in the field exercise (Exercise Southern Jackaroo) with the U.S. Forces and the ADF in May 2017. Through these various training and exercise opportunities among Japan, the United States and Australia, Japan continues to make efforts to improve mutual understanding and interoperability.

(2) Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

(i) Overview

Since 2015, defense cooperation and exchanges with the ROK have gradually been revitalized at various levels including high-level exchanges involving Defense Ministers and Chiefs of Joint Staff, and unit exchanges.

Particularly, in dealing with North Korea’s nuclear and missile issues, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation with the ROK in the security and defense areas. Following North Korea’s nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches, the Japan-ROK Defense Ministerial teleconference was carried out swiftly in January, February and September 2016 as well as March and May 2017 so that the two countries could closely cooperate in addressing North Korea’s nuclear and missile issues.

In June 2017, during the Japan-ROK Defense Ministerial Meeting held on the sidelines of the 16th Shangri-La Dialogue, the two ministers appreciated the close responses taken by the two countries such as the Japan-ROK Defense Ministerial teleconference following North Korea’s nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches, and affirmed their understanding of the importance of close Japan-ROK and Japan-U.S.-ROK collaboration and cooperation. The two ministers also exchanged opinions regarding the Japan-ROK defense cooperation and exchanges, and agreed to promote cooperation including dialogues between the defense authorities of the two countries and mutual visits of vessels and aircraft. Going forward, further development of the bilateral cooperation and exchanges is expected.
(ii) Japan-ROK General Security of Military Information Agreement

Based on the Trilateral Information Sharing Arrangement Concerning the Nuclear and Missile Threats Posed by North Korea signed in December 2014, the defense authorities in Japan and the ROK have exchanged and shared confidential information regarding North Korea’s nuclear and missile issues via the United States. On the other hand, in light of the increasingly serious situation surrounding North Korea with its frequently repeated ballistic missile launches and nuclear tests, the General Security of Military Information Agreement was concluded in November 2016 to further promote cooperation between Japan and the ROK. This agreement will serve as a framework to appropriately protect classified information exchanged between the Japanese and ROK Governments, and is expected to promote smoother and swifter information exchanges between the two governments.

Reference 54 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with the ROK (Past Three Years))

(3) Cooperative Relationship between Japan, the U.S., and the ROK

Since Japan, the United States, and the ROK share common interests pertaining to the peace and stability of this region, it is important that opportunities are seized to promote close cooperation in addressing various security issues including the issues regarding North Korea.

Japan, the United States, and the ROK have conducted Trilateral Defense Ministers’ Meetings on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue. At the working level, these three countries have coordinated with each other while closely sharing information at various levels through such opportunities as the Director-General level and the Director level meetings, video conferences, and chief-of-staff level meetings based on the framework of the Japan-U.S.-ROK Defense Trilateral Talks (DTT).

Most recently, a Japan-U.S.-ROK Defense Ministerial Meeting was held on the margins of the 16th Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2017, where the three ministers shared the view that North Korea’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs constituted an imminent threat to regional and global security. Regarding trilateral defense cooperation, the three ministers credited to the progress made in the recent joint exercises and training such as the Japan-U.S.-ROK missile warning exercises, and reconfirmed their intention to continue implementing these initiatives. At the working level, in April 2017, a Director-General level plenary meeting was held in Tokyo, at which the three sides urged North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile development programs, cease provocative acts that only heighten regional tensions, and comply with international obligations and commitments. Also at the Chief of Defense level, the Chief of Joint Staff visited the United States in October 2016 to attend the Japan-U.S.-ROK Chief of Staff level Meeting, and had discussions on the trilateral cooperation to address the increasing threat of North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missiles.

In addition, the Japan-U.S.-ROK cooperation relationship has been transforming into a more substantive relationship. For example, the trilateral Missile Warning

Commentary: Third Japan-U.S.-ROK Annual Chief of Defense Conference (Japan-U.S.-ROK CHOD)

In October 2016, the Chief of Joint Staff of the SDF visited the United States to participate in the Japan-U.S.-ROK Annual Chief of Defense Conference, and had meetings with the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Chairman of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In the Japan-U.S.-ROK CHOD, discussion took place on trilateral cooperation to respond to the nuclear test on September 9, 2016 and the series of ballistic missile launches by North Korea, and agreement was reached that the three countries would continue to further cooperate with each other to enhance regional peace and stability.

It was the third Japan-U.S.-ROK CHOD held since the first conference was held in Hawaii in July 2014. The latest conference, for the first time, was attended by the Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command and the Commander of the U.S.–ROK Combined Forces in addition to the Chiefs of Defense.

From right: Commander Harris of the U.S. Pacific Command, Chief of Staff Kawano, Chairman Dunford of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman Lee of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff, Commander Brooks of the U.S.–ROK Combined Forces Chief of Joint Staff Kawano participating in the Japan-U.S.-ROK Annual Chief of Defense Conference [Photo provided by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff]
Exercise was conducted in June and November 2016 as well as January and March 2017, while a maritime interdiction exercise was carried out in October 2016, and an anti-submarine warfare exercise was implemented in April 2017 for the first time as the Japan-U.S.-ROK joint exercise. Using various opportunities, the Japan-U.S.-ROK security cooperation must be continuously strengthened in various areas in the coming future.

### 3 Japan-India Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

#### (1) Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with India

India, which is becoming increasingly influential against a backdrop of what is projected to become the world’s largest population as well as its high economic growth and latent economic power, is located in the center of sea lanes that connect Japan with the Middle East and Africa, making it an extremely important country geopolitically for Japan. Furthermore, Japan and India, which share universal values\(^\text{10}\) as well as common interests in the peace, stability, and prosperity of Asia and the world, have established the “Special Strategic and Global Partnership.” In this context, Japan and India have also been strengthening their relations in the area of security in recent years.

Defense cooperation and exchanges between Japan and India have steadily deepened since October 2008 when the two countries signed the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between Japan and India. Meetings and consultations at various levels such as the ministerial and Chief of Staff level as well as service-to-service exchanges including bilateral and multilateral exercises have been regularly conducted. Moreover, in September 2014, the two countries signed the Memorandum on Japan-India Defense Cooperation and Exchanges, and December 2015, saw the conclusion of the Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of India concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology as well as the General Security of Military Information Agreement, further solidifying the institutional basis of the Japan-India defense cooperation and exchanges. These agreements have strengthened their relationship as two partners that are capable of dealing with regional and global issues, as well as the foundation of this partnership.

#### (2) Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

At the Japan-India Defense Ministerial Meeting in July 2016, the two ministers reaffirmed the importance of the bilateral defense exchanges, and agreed to conduct the Naval Exercise Malabar as a Japan-U.S.-India trilateral exercise from the following year to strengthen cooperation and build on exchanges in a wide range of areas, including by participating in HA/DR exercises as observers. Moreover, the two ministers referred to the final award of the Arbitral Tribunal on the South China Sea in the same month and reconfirmed the significance of ensuring maritime security and stability. In May 2017, Indian Minister for Finance, Defence and Corporate Affairs Jaitley visited Japan and agreed to further promote joint exercises and unit-to-unit exchanges.

Service components also discussed concrete measures and future direction for promoting service-to-service cooperation and exchanges on various occasions such as the Ground Component Staff Talks in November 2016, the GSDF Chief of Staff’s visit to India in April 2017, Indian Navy Chief’s visit to Japan, and the ASDF Chief of Staff’s visit to India, both held in December 2016. At the Japan-India Summit Meeting in November 2016, the two leaders welcomed these discussions in the joint statement by stating that, “the two sides now have institutional wide ranging dialogue mechanism in place covering all three services.”

With regard to exercises and training, the MSDF participated in Malabar 2016 in the waters between Sasebo and Okinawa in June 2016, while in December of the same year the MSDF carried out goodwill training with the Indian Navy’s vessels on its journey home from counter-piracy operations.

Furthermore, service-to-service exchanges have also been carried out more actively including a visit to India by the ASDF KC-767 aerial refueling and transport aircraft in July 2016, ground component expert-to-expert exchanges on counter-terrorism in December of the same year, and a visit of the helicopter crew of the Indian Air Force to the ASDF Air Rescue Squadron in March 2017.

#### Reference 55 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with India (Past Three Years))

### 4 Japan-China Defense Exchanges and Cooperation

#### (1) Significance of Defense Exchanges and Cooperation with China

Stable relations between Japan and China are an essential factor for the peace and stability of the Asia-
Pacific region. From broad and medium- to long-term perspectives, it is necessary for both countries to strive to build and enhance the “Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests with China” in all areas, including security. In particular, Japan will continue to encourage China to play a responsible and constructive role for the sake of regional peace, stability and prosperity, to comply with international norms of behavior, as well as to improve transparency with regard to its advancing military capabilities in the context of its rapidly increasing military budget. As part of such efforts, through continuing and promoting defense exchanges, Japan will urge China to demonstrate greater transparency in its military and security policies, and promote measures such as establishing a framework to avert or prevent unexpected situations.

(2) Recent Major Achievements in Defense Exchanges
Japan-China defense exchanges became stagnated following Japan’s acquisition and ownership of the three Senkaku Islands (Uotsuri Island, Kitakojima Island, and Minamikojima Island) in September 2012, but have gradually resumed since the latter half of 2014.

In November 2015, the Japan-China Defense Ministerial Meeting was held for the first time in four years and five months on the margins of the ADMM-Plus Meeting. The two ministers held a frank exchange of views regarding various issues between the two countries, and shared the view on the importance of the early commencement of the operation of the “Maritime and Air Communication Mechanism between Japan and China’s defense authorities” as well as the development of Japan-China defense exchanges. Regarding the “Maritime and Air Communication Mechanism between Japan and China’s defense authorities,” which aims to avoid unexpected collisions and prevent unforeseen consequences in waters and airspace from escalating into military clashes or political issues, at the Japan-China Summit Meeting in September 2016, the two leaders agreed to accelerate the consultation between the two countries to realize the early commencement of the mechanism. In November of the same year, the sixth Joint Working Group Meeting on this mechanism was held. Through these consultations and meetings, Japan continues to make adjustments with the Chinese side concerning the details of the early commencement of the operation of the mechanism.

Meanwhile, the fifth and sixth meetings of the Japan-China High-Level Consultation on Maritime Affairs were held in September and December 2016, respectively, and the 14th Japan-China Security Dialogue was held in November 2016.

As part of initiatives to build a “Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests,” it will be essential to strive to promote mutual trust and understanding between Japan and China through dialogue at various levels and in a range of areas, while also actively promoting concrete cooperation in non-traditional security areas, such as counter-piracy measures.

5 Japan-Russia Defense Exchanges and Cooperation
(1) Significance of Defense Exchanges and Cooperation with Russia
Russia has great influence on the security of Europe, Central Asia, and the Asia-Pacific region, and is an important neighboring country of Japan. It is therefore very important for Japan to promote mutual trust with Russia through defense exchanges. As Japan-Russia relations have continuously been developing in a wide range of areas, the MOD/SDF continuously conduct, in accordance with the Memorandum on Japan-Russia Defense Exchanges established in 1999 (revised in 2006), various dialogues between defense authorities, annual meetings based on the Japan-Russia Agreement on Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas, and bilateral search and rescue exercises.

Regarding Japan’s relationship with Russia, the Government of Japan intends to take an appropriate response while emphasizing the solidarity of the G7 (Group of Seven), taking the Ukrainian situation and other factors into account. In light of this, the MOD has also taken this into account in its exchanges with Russia. Simultaneously, it is important to maintain constant contact at the working level in order not to cause any unforeseen circumstances and unnecessary conflicts with Russia, a neighboring country. The MOD considers these points in a comprehensive manner and advances exchanges with Russia accordingly.

(2) Recent Major Achievements in Defense Exchanges
At the Japan-Russia Summit Meeting in April 2013, the two leaders affirmed the importance of expanding cooperation between Japan and Russia in the field of security and defense, amid the growing role of the Asia-Pacific region and major changes in the international security environment, and agreed to set up the Japan-Russia “2+2” Meeting. At the first Japan-Russia “2+2” Meeting in November 2013, the two countries agreed to conduct unit exchanges between ground forces and mutual dispatch of exercise observers on a regular basis, and bilateral exercises between counter-piracy units of the MSDF and
Russian Navy in the Gulf of Aden, as well as the regular hosting of the Japan-Russia Cyber Security Meeting.

In addition, at the Japan-Russia Summit Meeting in December 2016, the two leaders welcomed the holding of dialogues between the national security councils of both countries as well as defense exchanges, and agreed to continue these dialogues and exchanges going forward. Under such a circumstance, the MSDF carried out the 16th bilateral Japan-Russia search and rescue exercises in January 2017 in Maizuru.

At the second Japan-Russia “2+2” Meeting in March 2017, the two countries exchanged opinions regarding the regional situation, etc., and agreed to continue conducting defense exchanges such as working-level meetings, unit-to-unit exchanges, and Japan-Russia Search and Rescue Training. With respect to the activities of the Russian Armed Forces to improve armaments on the Four Northern Islands, including the deployment of surface-to-ship missiles on the Northern Territories and the deployment of divisions on islands that may contain the Four Northern Islands, the Japanese side expressed that they are incompatible with Japan’s stance that the Northern Territories are an inherent part of the territory of Japan and therefore it is regrettable.

At the second ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers’ Informal Meeting in Laos in November 2016, Defense Minister Inada announced the “Vientiane Vision” as a guideline for the Japan-ASEAN defense cooperation going forward. The vision for the first time provided, in a transparent manner, an overall picture of the priority areas of the future direction of ASEAN-wide defense cooperation, and was welcomed by all ASEAN member states.

From the viewpoint of actively promoting such bilateral and multilateral cooperation and stabilizing the security environment of the Asia-Pacific region, Japan strives to strengthen defense cooperation and exchanges with ASEAN member states.

Indonesia is the world’s largest island nation with the biggest territorial land and population among the ASEAN member states, and conducts active defense exchanges and cooperation with Japan. During the Japan-Indonesia Summit Meeting in March 2015, President Joko and Prime Minister Abe agreed to strengthen their Strategic Partnership underpinned by sea and democracy, and also reaffirmed their intention to hold the Japan-Indonesia Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting (“2+2” Meeting). At the “2+2” Meeting held in Tokyo for the first time in December of the same year, the two countries agreed to start negotiations on an agreement on the transfer of defense equipment and technology, actively participate in a multilateral naval exercise (Komodo 2016), further advance capacity building assistance, among other matters.

The Joint Statement of the Japan-Indonesia Summit Meeting in January 2017 confirms the importance of continuing dialogues between their foreign and defense authorities at various levels, including the regular holding of the Japan-Indonesia “2+2” Meeting and the holding of foreign and defense authorities’ meetings in order to further promote close cooperation in the security and defense fields. Similarly, at the working level, exchanges at various levels have been carried out, including consultations between foreign and defense authorities, consultations between defense authorities, and various educational and academic exchanges.

With regard to service-to-service exchanges, the Chief of Joint Staff visited Laos and Indonesia in December 2016, and an MSDF destroyer participated in the Exercise Komodo carried out in the seas and airspace surrounding Indonesia in April of the same year to
implement search and rescue and humanitarian assistance exercises, while in February 2017 the MSDF Overseas Training Cruise Squadron made a port call at Jakarta.

In January 2017, the ASDF KC-767 aerial refueling and transport aircraft visited Indonesia and carried out service-to-service exchanges.

Furthermore, Japan and Indonesia have also been working on strengthening cooperation through capacity building assistance in oceanography, international maritime law, and international aviation law.

(2) Vietnam

With Vietnam, which is a coastal country in the South China Sea with a population of approximately 90 million, Japan has developed cooperation and exchanges between their defense authorities. At the Japan-Vietnam Summit Meeting held in March 2014, the two leaders agreed to elevate the relationship between the two countries to an “Extensive Strategic Partnership.” In addition, Prime Minister Abe visited Vietnam in January 2017 and confirmed at the Japan-Vietnam Summit Meeting that they would strengthen cooperation in the security and defense areas.

During the Defense Ministerial Meeting in November 2015, the two ministers agreed to strengthen the defense cooperation between the two countries through a number of initiatives such as: port calls of the MSDF at the Cam Ranh Bay International Port situated at a key strategic location in the South China Sea; continuation of cooperation in peacekeeping operations; implementation of naval exercises regarding HA/DR; expansion and enhancement of capacity building assistance; commencement of working-level consultations regarding defense equipment and technology cooperation.

Based on the agreement reached at this meeting, an MSDF vessel made a port call for the first time at the Cam Ranh Bay International Port in April 2016, and the Chief of Joint Staff visited Vietnam in July 2016 to view Pacific Partnership 2016 (multilateral training). In December 2016, the ASDF transport unit visited Vietnam and conducted unit exchanges with the Vietnam Air Defense and Air Force.

It remains vital that Japan and Vietnam strengthen their relationship in order to achieve more concrete, practical cooperation, based on the memorandum on defense cooperation and exchanges as the cornerstone of their cooperation and exchanges.

(3) Singapore

In December 2009, Singapore became the first country in Southeast Asia with which Japan signed a memorandum on defense cooperation and exchanges, and a cooperative relationship is progressing steadily based on the memorandum. With Singapore and Japan regularly conducting discussions between their defense authorities, 15 rounds have already taken place. Moreover, Japan’s Minister of Defense attends the Shangri-La Dialogue organized by the IISS almost every year, where high-level exchanges between the Japanese and Singaporean defense ministers are carried out actively in which Japan’s security policy is also explained.

At the 16th Shangri-La Dialogue held in June 2017, Defense Minister Inada held a meeting with Singaporean Defense Minister Ng. The ministers exchanged opinions on the regional situation, defense cooperation and exchanges, and other topics and confirmed that the two countries would continue to seek to strengthen the bilateral relationship.

Moreover, in May 2017, the MSDF Chief of Staff participated in the Republic of Singapore Navy’s (RSN) 50th anniversary maritime review, and the MSDF vessels Izumo and Sazanami were also dispatched to participate in the review.

Additionally, port calls during international cooperation operations such as UN peacekeeping operations and counter-piracy activities and service-to-service exchanges are also actively conducted.

(4) The Philippines

Between Japan and the Philippines, along with high-level exchanges, there have been frequent visits by naval vessels, working-level exchanges including consultations between their defense authorities, and service-to-service exchanges. At the defense ministerial meeting held in January 2015, the two ministers signed a memorandum on defense cooperation and exchanges. This memorandum shows the intentions of the two countries to conduct cooperation in non-traditional security areas such as maritime security, in addition to holding defense ministerial meetings and vice-ministerial consultations.
on a regular basis; reciprocal visits between the Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff, Chiefs of Staff of the SDF, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Commanders of each service; and participation in training and exercises.

In addition, at the Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting in November 2015, the two leaders reached an agreement in principle regarding the defense equipment and technology transfer agreement, which was later signed in February 2016.

Furthermore, at the Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting in September 2016, the two leaders agreed to embody the transfer of MSDF’s TC-90 training aircraft to the Philippines in order to enhance the capabilities of the Philippines in HA/DR, transportation, and maritime situational awareness. At the summit meeting with President Duterte in January 2017, the two countries agreed that they would promote defense cooperation in various fields such as capacity building assistance, defense equipment cooperation, and training and exercises.

In March 2017, in the presence of Japanese State Minister of Defense Wakamiya and the Filipino Defense Minister Lorenzana, two of the MSDF’s TC-90 training aircraft were transferred to the Naval Base Heracleo Alano, Sangley Point. The remaining three aircraft are planned to be transferred by the end of FY2017. This transfer does not only involve the transfer of the aircraft; it represents a cooperation that includes training for the Philippine Navy pilots and maintenance support for the Philippine Navy maintenance personnel.

Meanwhile, in June 2017, President Duterte became the first foreign leader to board the MSDF destroyer Izumo while making a port call at the Port of Subic Bay and view the medical equipment on the destroyer. In addition to praising the advanced capability of the destroyer to provide HA/DR, President Duterte conducted a personal and frank exchange of opinions on the Japan-Philippines bilateral relationship and the international situation with Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Kawai. After viewing the destroyer, the Filipino President remarked that “Japan is a historically important friend that I would like to get along with.”

Furthermore, in regard to service-to-service exchanges, the Japanese Chief of Joint Staff held a meeting with the Chief of Defense of the Philippines when he visited the Philippines to participate in the CHOD Conference in September 2016. Additionally, the ASDF transport unit (KC-767 aerial refueling/transport aircraft) visited the Philippines and carried out unit exchanges in July 2016, and the personnel from the GSDF, MSDF and ASDF participated in the U.S.-Philippine joint exercise (Exercise Balikatan 2017) in May 2017. In the same month of the same year, the ASDF Chief of Staff visited the Philippines and conducted high-level exchanges between the Philippine Air Force Commander and other officers.

(5) Thailand
With Thailand, Japan has a long history of defense cooperation and exchanges based on the traditionally good relationship between the two countries, including the commencement of the dispatch of Defense Attachés and consultations between defense authorities at an early stage. As for the acceptance of foreign students to the National Defense Academy, a Thai student became the first foreign student to be accepted in 1958, and since then Thailand has sent the largest cumulative number of students. The MOD/SDF, since 2005, has been participating in the multilateral military exercise Cobra Gold hosted by the United States and Thailand. In February 2016, the Chief of Staff of Joint Staff visited this exercise and carried out high-level exchanges.

In April 2016, Japan held a human resource development seminar related to international aviation law, as the first capacity building assistance for Thailand, while in May Japan organized an invitation program regarding aviation safety for the Royal Thai Air Force Safety Center. In June 2016, then Defense Minister Nakatani visited Thailand to pay a courtesy call on Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and hold meetings with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Prawit Wongsuwon and others, during which the two countries agreed to strengthen bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges.

As for service-to-service exchanges, the Chief of Air Staff visited Thailand in November 2016 and held a meeting with Air Chief Marshal Johnh Rungswan, the first National Defense Academy graduate to become
Royal Thai Air Force Commander. Commander John visited Japan in May 2017 to hold a meeting with the Chief of Air Staff, and they shared an understanding that strengthening the Japan-Thailand service-to-service relationship would be an important factor contributing to the peace and stability of the region. In addition, the ASDF U-4 multi-purpose support aircraft visited Thailand and conducted unit exchanges in January 2017.

(6) Cambodia
Since dispatching the SDF for UN peacekeeping operations to Cambodia for the first time in 1992, Japan’s capacity building assistance for Cambodia commenced in 2013 and defense cooperation and exchanges between the two countries have made steady progress. At the Japan-Cambodia Summit Meeting in December 2013, the bilateral relationship was upgraded to “strategic partnership.” After the summit, then Defense Minister Onodera signed the Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges between the Ministry of Defense of Japan and the Ministry of National Defence of the Kingdom of Cambodia. Japan has also taken steps to strengthen cooperation through capacity building assistance such as practical training for road construction.

As for service-to-service exchanges, the MSDF Overseas Training Cruise Unit made a port call at Sihanoukville in February 2017, and conducted unit exchanges for the purpose of enhancing goodwill with the Royal Cambodian Navy.

(7) Myanmar
Regarding Japan’s relations with Myanmar, Japan has been promoting exchanges since Myanmar’s transition from military rule to democratic government in March 2011, such as realizing the Administrative Vice-Minister of Defense’s first visit to the country and inviting Myanmar to participate in multilateral conferences hosted by Japan. In November 2013, the first consultation between defense authorities was held in the capital city Naypyidaw, during which the two countries exchanged opinions regarding the procedures for their future defense exchanges and agreed to further promote exchanges. Furthermore, in November 2014, then Defense Minister Eto held a meeting with Defense Minister Wai Lwin of Myanmar, the chair country, while attending the Japan-ASEAN Ministerial Roundtable and confirmed their intention to promote defense exchanges.

In June 2016, then Defense Minister Nakatani visited Myanmar to hold separate meetings with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Myanmar Defence Services, and Lieutenant General Sein Win, Union Minister for Defence, and to pay a courtesy call on State Counselor and Foreign Minister Aung San Suu Kyi. In September 2016, as a keynote speaker for the Japan-ASEAN Vice-Ministerial Forum, Lieutenant General Sein Win became the first defense minister from Myanmar to visit Japan and held a meeting with Defense Minister Inada. The two ministers agreed to have a shared recognition of the importance of promoting regional peace and stability through dialogues and cooperation.

The Commander of the Myanmar Air Force visited Japan in July 2015 and October 2016 and the Deputy Commander of the Myanmar Armed Force who also serves as the Myanmar Armed Forces Commander visited Japan in August 2015, demonstrating the deepening of the high-level exchanges between the two countries. In March 2016, the ASDF transport unit visited Myanmar and carried out its first unit exchanges with the Myanmar Air Force. Moreover, Japan is also making efforts to strengthen cooperation through capacity building assistance for aviation meteorology and other areas.

(8) Laos
Defense cooperation and exchanges between Japan and Laos have made gradual progress since 2011, when the Defense Attaché to Vietnam was also appointed as Defense Attaché to Laos. In April 2013, the National Defense Academy accepted students from Laos for the first time, and in August 2013, the first Japan-Laos Defense Ministerial Meeting was held. Since 2014, Japan and Laos have served as co-chairs of the EWG on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief of the ADMM-Plus, and the relationship between the defense authorities of the two countries has made significant strides through cooperation under multilateral frameworks. Also in November 2016, Defense Minister Inada became the first Japanese defense minister to visit Laos, and exchanged views with the Minister of National Defense Lieutenant General Chansamone.
regarding policies for further defense cooperation such as high-level exchanges and capacity building assistance as well as agreed to promote defense cooperation and exchanges between the two countries. Following this, the first visit to Laos by a Japanese Chief of Joint Staff was made in December 2016.

In addition, the ASDF transport unit (KC-767 aerial refueling/transport aircraft) visited Laos, and carried out unit exchanges with the Laos Air Force. With regard to capacity building assistance, the GSDF provided training on HA/DR to the Lao People’s Army engineering unit and medical unit in August 2016.

(9) Malaysia

Regarding Japan’s relations with Malaysia, a Japan-Malaysia Defense Ministerial Meeting was held on the sidelines of the 16th Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2017. The two ministers exchanged views regarding bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges, and agreed to continue to coordinate between the two countries.

As for service-to-service exchanges, in April 2016 and March 2017, vessels from the MSDF and the Royal Malaysian Navy conducted a goodwill exercise in waters surrounding Malaysia. In February 2017, the Commander of the Malaysian Navy visited Japan and exchanged opinions on maritime security with the Chief of Staff of the MSDF. With regard to the ASDF, airlift units (U-4 multipurpose support aircraft) visited Subang for service-to-service exchanges in January 2017.

Furthermore, the MSDF Overseas Training Cruise Squadron, accompanied by a practice submarine, made a port call at Kota Kinabalu in April 2017. In this way, efforts are being made in various fields to strengthen the relationship between the SDF and the Malaysian Armed Forces.

(10) Brunei

Regarding Japan’s relations with Brunei, during the Second ADMM-Plus meeting held in Brunei in August 2013, then Defense Minister Onodera held talks with Brunei’s Minister of Energy Mohammad Yasmin Umar and exchanged views on the initiatives of the ADMM-Plus. In addition, aircraft from all of the SDF’s three forces participated in a joint exercise of the EWGs on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and Military Medicine held in June 2013 in Brunei for the first time based on the framework of the ADMM-Plus. In addition, aircraft from all of the SDF’s three forces participated in a joint exercise of the EWGs on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and Military Medicine held in June 2013 in Brunei for the first time based on the framework of the ADMM-Plus. While in May 2016 the MSDF destroyer Ise participated in a joint exercise held in Brunei, which served as a co-chair of the EWG on Maritime Security of the ADMM-Plus. During the joint exercise, Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah visited the MSDF destroyer Ise.

(1) New Zealand

With New Zealand, a memorandum on defense cooperation and exchange was signed in August 2013. During the Summit Meeting in July 2014, the two countries agreed to conduct studies on an ACSA.

Furthermore, on the occasion of the 16th Shangri-La Meeting in June 2017, a Japan-New Zealand Defense Ministerial Meeting was held. Appreciating the active personnel exchanges conducted at various levels between the two countries, the two ministers agreed to further promote defense cooperation including service-to-service exchanges involving vessels and aircraft.

Between the services, the MSDF destroyer Takanami participated in the international fleet review and the ADMM-Plus maritime security field exercise conducted in New Zealand in November 2016, and two P-1 patrol aircraft participated in a multinational joint exercise hosted by New Zealand. When an earthquake occurred in the South Island of New Zealand in November, one P-1 patrol aircraft that had been dispatched checked the disaster situation as part of an international disaster relief activity.

Also, the New Zealand Air Force’s transport aircraft visited Japan to conduct the first unit exchanges between their air forces in October 2016. In February 2017, the Chief of Air Staff visited New Zealand for the first time in 12 years to participate in the Air Show (Air Tattoo) hosted by the Royal New Zealand Air Force, and exchanged
opinions with the Royal New Zealand Air Force Commander and agreed to deepen defense cooperation. Japan sent a KC-767 aerial refueling/transport aircraft to participate in the air show and carried out unit exchanges.

(2) Mongolia
Following the signing of a memorandum on Japan-Mongolia defense cooperation and exchanges in January 2012, Japan and Mongolia have promoted high-level exchanges and worked to strengthen cooperation through capacity building assistance. The two countries have striven to enhance cooperation through capacity building assistance. In addition, at the 14th Shangri-La Dialogue in May 2015, the Japan-Mongolia Defense Ministerial Meeting was held and opinions were exchanged regarding bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges. At the meeting held between the Chief of Joint Staff and the Chief of Defense in October of the same year, agreement was reached to promote security cooperation in the area of peacekeeping operations.

In September 2016, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense Kobayashi visited Mongolia to attend the completion ceremony of a capacity building assistance program (civil engineering).

(3) Timor-Leste
In June 2016, for the first time in 14 years, then Defense Minister Nakatani visited Timor-Leste to which the SDF had been dispatched as part of the UN peacekeeping operations to support the country’s independence since 2002. Minister Nakatani and Minister Cristovão agreed that the two countries would continue and deepen exchanges between defense authorities through capacity building assistance, dispatch of students from Timor-Leste to the National Defense Academy and other schools, and port calls by MSDF vessels. In September 2016, destroyer Fuyuzuki made a port call at Timor-Leste.

(4) Sri Lanka
Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense Miyazawa became Japan’s first parliamentary vice-minister to visit Sri Lanka in December 2016. As for service-to-service exchanges, six rounds of search and rescue exercises, etc. were conducted using vessels of the Sri Lanka Navy and MSDF vessels in the same year, and in November 2016 the MSDF participated in the International Maritime Conference (Galle Dialogue 2016) hosted by the Sri Lanka Navy.

Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with European Countries
Europe shares universal values with Japan and plays a central role in working to address common challenges to global security, focusing primarily on non-traditional security areas such as counter-terrorism and combating piracy, as well as international peace cooperation activities. In this regard, promoting defense cooperation and exchanges with European countries provides the foundations for Japan to become actively involved in dealing with these challenges, and is important for both Japan and Europe.

(1) The United Kingdom
The United Kingdom, being a major power that has influence not only in Europe but also in the rest of the world, has historically maintained close relations with Japan. On the security front, Japan shares the same strategic interests as the United Kingdom, as both countries are important allies of the United States. Given this relationship, it is extremely important for Japan to promote cooperation with the United Kingdom by working together on global issues such as international peace cooperation activities, counter-terrorism and counter-piracy operations, and through exchanges of views on regional situations.

With regard to Japan’s relationship with the United Kingdom, a Defense Cooperation Memorandum was signed in June 2012. Following this, the bilateral Agreement on the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology came into effect in July 2013, and the Japan-U.K. Information Security Agreement entered into force in January 2014, leading to the development of a foundation for defense equipment and technology cooperation as well as information sharing between the two countries.
At the Japan-U.K. Summit Meeting in May 2014, in order to enhance their cooperation in the security field, the two prime ministers agreed to hold the Japan-U.K. “2+2” Meeting, to begin negotiations towards the conclusion of an ACSA, and to promote joint exercises between the SDF and the British Armed Forces. Following this, the first “2+2” Meeting was held in January 2015. At the meeting, the two countries agreed to strengthen cooperation in the security and defense fields, and at the same time, shared strategic situational awareness. During the second “2+2” Meeting in January 2016, the two countries confirmed: (1) the progress made on two joint research projects in relation to defense equipment and technology cooperation, and that they would start a new joint research on personnel vulnerability evaluation; (2) that they would pursue the visit to Japan of the Typhoon aircraft of the Royal Air Force by the end of 2016 and Japan-U.K. joint exercises during the International Mine Countermeasures Exercise in the Persian Gulf; (3) that they would promote bilateral coordination to enhance the capability of Southeast Asian states; and (4) that they would aim to conclude the ACSA as early as possible. Following this, a director-level Working Group meeting on capacity building assistance between the defense authorities of Japan and the United Kingdom was held in June and October 2016 in both countries. Additionally, from October to November 2016, the Royal Air Force Typhoon fighter jets squadron visited the ASDF Misawa Base to conduct joint exercises with the ASDF. This exercise was the first joint exercise based in Japan that the ASDF carried out with foreign military forces other than the U.S. Forces. In January 2017, the Japan-U.K. ACSA was signed, which was followed by the development of relevant laws and regulations. The conclusion of the ACSA enables the two countries to make mutual arrangements between the SDF and the British Armed Forces involving supplies and

After Participating in the Japan-U.K. Joint Exercise, Guardian North 16

Wing Commander Roger Elliot, then Commanding Officer of II (Army Cooperation) Squadron, Royal Air Force

The Guardian North 16 exercise was one of the highlights for the Royal Air Force during its three-month dispatch to Asia, while the exercise was the most challenging for the Typhoon fighter unit of any exercise conducted since its operation commenced over a decade ago. II (AC) Squadron flew a distance of about 10,000 nautical miles from their base camp and arrived in Japan to participate in this exercise. The Royal Air Force had previously dispatched Typhoon fighter aircraft to various areas and regions, but never had we dispatched aircraft to such a distant place and faced various issues along the way. However, we arrived in Japan safely and were able to conduct the exercise, thanks to the warm support received from everyone at the ASDF Misawa Air Base, in addition to the cooperation between the ASDF and the Royal Air Force.

Guardian North 16 was an effective exercise and also a good opportunity for the two air forces to learn about each other. My memories of Guardian North 16 are of the passion of the people who welcomed us in Misawa, their hospitality, the fantastic culture of Japanese cuisine, and the hot spring in Towada Hachimantai. The best memory, however, is of flying over Japan with the 3rd Air Wing and other ASDF personnel. We are looking forward to the day when we can welcome the SDF personnel and fly together over the U.K.

Wing Commander Elliot: photo center

A scene from the joint exercise

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The ACSA applies to the following activities: (1) joint exercises; (2) UN peacekeeping operations; (3) internationally coordinated peace and security operations; (4) humanitarian international relief operations; (5) operations to cope with large-scale disasters; (6) protection measures or transportation of nationals of either party or others for their evacuation from overseas; (7) communication and coordination or other routine activities; and (8) any other activity in which the provision of supplies and services is permitted under the laws and regulations of the respective countries.
services such as water, food, fuel and transportation, through a unified procedure in the case of joint exercises and large-scale disaster responses, etc., which will further facilitate and strengthen the Japan-U.K. strategic partnership.

In addition, in July 2015, unit-to-unit exchanges were carried out in the United Kingdom in which ASDF KC-767 aerial refueling/transport aircraft participated in the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT). In December of the same year, the Chief of Staff of the ASDF and Chief of the Air Staff of the Royal Air Force participated in panel discussions during the Japan-U.K. Security Dialogue of the Third Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) held at the RUSI Asia Headquarters. Moreover, goodwill training with the vessels of the MSDF and the Royal Navy was conducted in the Gulf of Aden in the same month of the same year. In this manner, progress has been made in the exchanges between the two countries.

(2) France

France is a major power that has influence not only in Europe and Africa, but also in the world. It historically has had a close relationship with Japan and is also positioned as a special partner.

The first Japan-France “2+2” Meeting was held in Paris in January 2014, followed by the visit of French Minister of Defense Le Drian to Japan in July of the same year when the Statement of Intent to promote defense cooperation and exchanges was signed. At the second “2+2” Meeting held in Tokyo in March 2015, the two countries underscored the threat of terrorism, and confirmed to strengthen bilateral intelligence exchange and cooperation in Africa and the Middle East to fight against terrorism in cooperation with the international community as well as strengthen bilateral cooperation in the areas of defense equipment and technology cooperation and maritime security. In addition, the two countries signed the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology. In January 2017, at the third “2+2” Meeting in Paris, the two countries confirmed that they would: (1) commence negotiations for the Japan-France ACSA; (2) materialize cooperation regarding unmanned underwater vehicles for mine detection, as the first concrete cooperation project in the defense equipment and technology field; and (3) promote joint exercises. The two countries also expressed their expectations for fleshing out their cooperation in the field of space such as the Space Situational Awareness (SSA) system. On this basis, in March 2017, the second meeting of the Japan-France Comprehensive Dialogue on Space was held. In the meeting, the “Technical arrangement concerning information sharing regarding SSA between the relevant authority in Japan and the Minister of Defense of the French Republic” was signed to strengthen the Japan-France SSA cooperation, and the two countries agreed to promote specific cooperation.

In June 2017, a Japan-France Defense Ministerial Meeting was held on the margins of the 16th Shangri-La Dialogue. The two ministers reaffirmed the importance of France’s involvement in the Asia-Pacific region. Furthermore, they agreed to further strengthen defense cooperation and exchanges between the two countries, such as joint exercises and defense equipment and technology cooperation, while welcoming the implementation of the joint exercise conducted by Japan, France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The SDF has also been participating in the Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief training hosted by the French Armed Forces in New Caledonia (Exercise Équateur/Croix du Sud) since 2014.

(3) North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

When Prime Minister Abe visited Europe in May 2014, he held a meeting with then North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary General Rasmussen at NATO Headquarters and signed the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP). Based on the IPCP, female GSDF personnel were dispatched to NATO Headquarters for the first time in December 2014 as part of the Japan-NATO cooperation in the field of women, peace and security. At the same time, the MOD/SDF has participated in the annual meeting of the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (NCGP) since 2015.

In January 2017, Defense Minister Inada visited NATO Headquarters in Brussels for the first time in 10 years and held a meeting with NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg. In the meeting, the importance of the Japan-NATO cooperation in dealing with today’s security issues was confirmed, and the two leaders reaffirmed the promotion of cooperation in various fields, such as
maritime security including counter-piracy operations, cybersecurity, HA/DR, and mainstreaming women, peace and security. With regard to the dispatch of a liaison officer to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), which had been proposed by the NATO side, Defense Minister Inada in the meeting announced Japan’s intention to dispatch a liaison officer, and a liaison officer was newly assigned to SHAPE in February 2017. In addition, General Petr Pavel, Chairman of the Military Committee, NATO made an official visit to Japan in June 2016 for a meeting with the Chief of Joint Staff, and both sides confirmed their intention to continue maintaining close cooperation based on the IPCP.

(4) Other European Countries

With regard to Japan’s relationship with Germany, on the occasion of the 14th Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore in May 2015, a Japan-Germany Defense Ministerial Meeting was held for the first time in six years with Minister of Defense von der Leyen. In addition, the Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff visited Germany in September 2016, and other high-level and working-level exchanges have been deepening.

With Italy, the two countries have been promoting institutional development for facilitating defense cooperation and exchanges, including the entry into force of the Japan-Italy Information Security Agreement in June 2016 and the signing of the Agreement concerning the Transfer of the Defence Equipment and Technology in May 2017. In June 2016, a Japan-Italy Defense Ministerial Meeting was held on the margins of the 15th Shangri-La Dialogue. Welcoming the milestone year of the 150th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Italy, the two ministers agreed to advance the Japan-Italy defense cooperation and exchanges, such as a port call by the MSDF Overseas Training Cruise Unit to Italy and defense equipment and technology cooperation. In May 2017, Minister of Defense Pinotti visited Japan for a Defense Ministerial Meeting. At the meeting, the two ministers signed a memorandum concerning defense cooperation and exchanges, and confirmed that they would further promote defense cooperation and exchanges between the two countries, including in the area of defense equipment and technology.

With the Netherlands, the General Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Netherlands visited Japan in October 2015 and held talks with the Chief of Joint Staff. The two sides agreed to cooperate on peacekeeping operations and counter-piracy operations. Also, in December 2016, Minister of Defense Hennis-Plasschaert visited Japan, and at the Japan-Netherlands Defense Ministerial Meeting, the two ministers signed a memorandum regarding defense cooperation and exchanges.

With Scandinavian countries, in addition to Military-Military Talks (MM) at the director-general level, Japan and these countries have striven to strengthen their relationship through high-level exchanges such as visits to Sweden and Finland by the Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs in February 2017, a visit to Sweden by the Chief of the Joint Staff in February 2017, and a visit to Japan by the Commander of the Finnish Air Force in March 2017.

Other Countries

Between Japan and Canada, high-level exchanges, talks between defense authorities, and other exchanges have been conducted. Most recently, in June 2016, a Japan-Canada Defense Ministerial Meeting was held on the sidelines of the 15th Shangri-La Dialogue. The two ministers confirmed that both Japan and Canada are Pacific nations and partners sharing fundamental values. The ministers welcomed the steady implementation of defense exchanges between the two countries including regular meetings and reciprocal visits of vessels, and agreed to continue advancing the bilateral exchanges further under the new Canadian administration as well.

In March 2015, the first Defense Ministerial Meeting with Minister of Defense Pinzón of Colombia was held during his visit to Japan. In December 2016, the Japanese and Colombian ministers signed a memorandum on defense exchanges and agreed to proceed with specific
exchanges going forward.

With Brazil, the GSDF Chief of Staff made his first visit to the country in February 2016 and agreed to move the exchanges between the GSDF and the Brazilian Army into full swing.

As a capacity building assistance program for Kazakhstan, the MOD invited five officers from the Kazakhstan Ministry of Defense to Japan in October 2016. These officers were provided with explanations mainly about Japan’s initiatives in the medical field, as well as opportunities to visit facilities and view equipment used by the SDF, and observe practical war surgery training.

With regard to Middle Eastern countries, between Japan and Turkey, the Administrative Vice-Minister of Defense conducted talks with then Undersecretary of the Ministry of National Defence Ümit Dündar in July 2012, during which they signed a Statement of Intent to promote defense exchanges and cooperation. In March 2013, then Minister of National Defence Yılmaz visited Japan and a Japan-Turkey Defense Ministerial Meeting was held. At this meeting, the two ministers agreed to hold a meeting between their defense authorities at the earliest possible date and promote a variety of defense exchanges. In addition, the GSDF Chief of Staff visited Turkey in May 2016 and agreed to advance defense cooperation and exchanges between the two ground forces.

Between Japan and Jordan, a memorandum on defense cooperation and exchanges was signed when King Abdullah visited Japan in October 2016. Also in February 2017, the MOD officially invited to Japan the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Jordanian Armed Forces. In a meeting with the Chief of Joint Staff, the two sides agreed to continue promoting bilateral exchanges based on the memorandum.

Between Japan and Jordan, a memorandum on defense cooperation and exchanges was signed when King Abdullah visited Japan in October 2016. Also in February 2017, the MOD officially invited to Japan the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Jordanian Armed Forces. In a meeting with the Chief of Joint Staff, the two sides agreed to continue promoting bilateral exchanges based on the memorandum.

Japan-Saudi Arabia Summit Meetings were held in April 2013 and February 2014. During the meetings, the two leaders reaffirmed their intention to promote dialogue and defense exchanges in the security field, and continue engaging in talks and cooperation at various levels including the commencement of a dialogue between the security councils of the two countries in order to enhance the comprehensive bilateral partnership. In September 2016, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Deputy Crown Prince and Minister of Defense, visited Japan. A Japan-Saudi Arabia Defense Ministerial Meeting was held, and the memorandum between Japan and Saudi Arabia on cooperation in the field of defense was signed. As for service-to-service exchanges, the Chief of Joint Staff visited Saudi Arabia in January 2017 and held a meeting with the Chief of General Staff. In the meeting, the two Chiefs agreed to further promote bilateral defense exchanges through the defense attaché and military attaché dispatched by each country.

Prime Minister Abe visited the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar in succession in May and August 2013, and shared the view regarding the necessity of promoting cooperation with those countries in the security and defense fields. In April 2012 and February 2015, a memorandum on defense exchanges was signed with Bahrain and Qatar, respectively. In terms of service-to-service exchanges, the Chief of Joint Staff visited Qatar in January 2017 and, during the meeting with the Chief of Staff, they agreed to continue Arabic language training assistance for the SDF personnel serving at educational institutions of the Qatar Armed Forces.

With Oman, Prime Minister Abe held a meeting with Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the Sultan of Oman, in January 2014. Both leaders agreed to enhance cooperation in the field of maritime security, including counter-piracy measures for ensuring the security and safety of sea lanes, as well as promoting defense exchanges. As for service-to-service exchanges, the Chief of Joint Staff visited Oman in February 2017 for a meeting with the Chief of Staff, and the two chiefs shared an understanding of the importance of the sea lanes in the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea.

Djibouti is currently the only country where an SDF base is located overseas and counter-piracy operations are carried out. In August 2016, Defense Minister Inada visited Djibouti, and the two countries shared the view concerning the importance of the SDF’s activities contributing to the safety of ships navigating in the Gulf of Aden. In addition, the GSDF Chief of Staff officially invited the Commander of the Djiboutian Army to Japan in November 2016, and training for the operation of heavy equipment was conducted with the Djiboutian Army in Japan in January-March 2017 as an assistance program to improve its disaster response capabilities, in an effort to strengthen the Japan-Djibouti relationship.