Section 2: Public Relations Activities, Information Disclosure, and Related Activities

1 Various Public Relations Activities

As the activities of the MOD/SDF cannot be carried out without the understanding and support of the Japanese people, it is important to be proactive in undertaking easily comprehensible public relations activities and to gain the trust and cooperation of the public.

According to a “Public Opinion Survey on the Self-Defense Forces and Defense Issues” conducted by the Cabinet Office (in January 2015), the public expectations and evaluations towards the SDF have been increasing as the scope of MOD/SDF activities has expanded both domestically and internationally. In light of this result, the MOD/SDF will continue to conduct a variety of PR activities, thereby striving to ensure better understanding of the current status of the MOD/SDF.

In addition, given that understanding and support from foreign countries are also of utmost importance for the SDF to conduct its missions successfully, it is essential that the MOD strengthens efforts to provide information to foreign countries about MOD/SDF initiatives, including about SDF activities abroad.


1 Information Communication for Domestic and International Audiences

The MOD/SDF conducts PR activities using the Internet such as official websites, video distribution, and social media (Social Networking Service) as well as actively distributes information through various means including television broadcasting, large-sized billboards, and the showing of PR videos on trains.

The MOD has also been making great efforts to provide accurate information in a more extensive and timely fashion, by creating brochures, PR videos, and manga editions of the defense white paper, as well as providing assistance in editing the PR magazine MAMOR and cooperation on media coverage.

Furthermore, based on the increasing interest in the

International Public Relations Initiatives:
Participation in the Basel Tattoo 2016 in Switzerland

Lieutenant Chiaki Iwata, Band Section, MSDF Band Tokyo

In July 2016, the MSDF Band Tokyo (Tokyo Band) participated in the Basel Tattoo 2016. The Basel Tattoo (BT) is an internationally recognized music event falling under the patronage of the Swiss Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sports (DDPS). Tattoo refers to military music festival.

At the BT2016, the Tokyo Band gave a drill performance and a joint performance with the Band of Her Majesty’s Royal Marines. The Tokyo Band’s drill performance (*) started solemnly with the Tokyo Olympic Games Fanfare, followed by the singing of a Japanese soul song, “Furusato,” and a resounding performance of traditional Japanese musical instruments. Lastly, the Tokyo Band gave a performance to the MSDF official march “Gunkan (Warship),” forming an anchor shape that revolved in perfect order. This received shouts of “fantastic” and a big round of applause from the audience and other people. While we had some anxieties about the joint performance with the Band of Her Majesty’s Royal Marines as the detailed arrangements for the performance could not be finalized partly due to cultural differences, the two bands managed to put on a splendid performance on stage.

Music is described as a global common language. During the BT this year, through such music we successfully raised the profile of not only the SDF but also Japan towards the world. Hoping that the “power of music” of our band will serve as a bridge to peace, we are committed to putting utmost effort into our daily training.

(*) A performance style that deploys various formations according to different songs.

1 In addition to Facebook and other SNS accounts, GSDF opened an Instagram account in January 2017.
MOD/SDF initiatives by the international community, the MOD has been striving to gain the understanding of people in other countries by publishing the monthly English magazine, “Japan Defense Focus.” It is proactively transmitting information to the international community through efforts such as providing international media with opportunities for press coverage, enhancement of the English section of the MOD website, publishing English versions of the defense white paper and brochures, as well as producing PR videos.

2 Events and PR Facilities

The MOD/SDF conducts activities to widely inform nationals of the current circumstances of the SDF. These activities include the GSDF Fuji Fire Power Exercise, cruises to experience MSDF vessels, and demonstration flights and boarding experiences on aircraft. In addition, at camps and bases throughout the country, events including equipment exhibitions and unit tours are held on occasions such as the anniversary of a unit’s foundation. In some instances, they also hold parades throughout the cities, with cooperation from the local communities. Furthermore, as part of the commemoration of the SDF anniversary, the SDF Marching Festival is held at Nippon Budokan arena every year. The festival attracted approximately 40,000 visitors in total in 2016.

Concerning annual reviews by the SDF, a troop review, a fleet review, and an air review are hosted in rotation by the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF respectively. In 2016, a troop review was held by the GSDF at Asaka Training Area, and approximately 4,000 personnel and officers from all three SDF branches, approximately 250 vehicles, and approximately 50 aircraft including MV-22 Osprey participated in the review. It reinforced the mission of the SDF personnel and uplifted their morale, while also appealing to Japanese people the SDF’s strength and the robust Japan-U.S. Alliance. The troop review attracted approximately 40,000 visitors, including visitors who attended the review and the rehearsal. In 2017, an air review by the ASDF is planned to take place.

The MOD/SDF also actively opens PR facilities to the public. For instance, the number of visitors on the facility tour at the PR facilities in the MOD at Ichigaya district (Ichigayadai Tour) reached 400,000 as of the end of March 2017. Each SDF service also has a large-scale PR facility in addition to PR facilities and archives at the SDF camps and bases open to the public. Furthermore, the MOD/SDF provides cooperation for shooting films and TV programs such as the film “Shin Godzilla” (Godzilla Resurgence).

3 Trial Enlistment Programs

The MOD/SDF offers SDF Life Experience Tours for undergraduate and graduate students as well as women and Enlistment Experience Programs for groups, companies and other organizations. These programs are intended to promote participants’ understanding of the SDF by offering opportunities to experience the daily life and training of the SDF, as well as to have direct contact with SDF personnel. In FY2016, approximately 140 people participated in SDF Life Experience Tours. From the private sector, the SDF received approximately 1,400 requests for Enlistment Experience Programs, and approximately 22,000 employees experienced SDF life.

2 Initiatives for Information Disclosure

1 Appropriate Operation of the Information Disclosure System and Personal Data Protection System

In accordance with the Act on Access to Information Held by Administrative Organs in 2001, the MOD discloses its administrative documents properly. In light of respecting individual rights in line with the Act on the Protection of Personal Information Held by Administrative Organs, the MOD takes measures to ensure the security of the...
personal information under its jurisdiction, and discloses such information upon due request.

Reference 81 (Record of Information Disclosure by the Ministry of Defense (FY2016))

2 Appropriate Operation of the Whistleblower Protection System

The MOD sets up a system to handle public interest-related information disclosures by its officials, employees and outside workers, establishing an internal contact desk for dealing with information disclosure that is in the public interest and whistleblower protection.

3 Engagement in Policy Evaluation

The MOD has been conducting the evaluation of various policies based on its policy evaluation system. In FY2016, the MOD conducted policy evaluations of R&D programs and projects concerning taxation special measures as well as the major policies and programs of the NDGP and the Mid-Term Defense Program (MTDP).

Brilliant Performance by SDF Personnel on the Olympic Stage

Second Lieutenant (GSDF) Hirooki Arai, Second Training Division, SDF Physical Training School (Camp Asaka) - Bronze medalist in the male 50 km race walk event, Rio 2016 Summer Olympic Games

I participated in the male 50km race walk event at the 2016 Rio Olympics. On the day of the event, the weather condition was tough with strong sunshine. Although I was temporarily disqualified due to an accident involving contact with a Canadian athlete during the race, I was able to win the bronze medal in the end. The Tokyo Olympic Games will be held in 2020. I will do my best to become an athlete who can give people dreams and hopes through race events. I appreciate your continuous support.

First Lieutenant Keishin Yoshida, Cold Weather Special Physical Training Office, SDF Physical Training School (Camp Makomanai) - Member of the SDF ski team aiming to be selected for the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympic Games

In aiming for participating in the Olympic Games and winning an Olympic medal, the most important thing is to keep calmness and to maintain health conditions. Even if you are an excellent athlete, you cannot compete with other top athletes in the world unless you create an environment that enables you to do your best. In addition to training my body by working out from summer, I will discipline my mind to have the strength to be able to do my best in any situation.

Your support will give me strength. I appreciate your support.