**North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles poses a new level of threat**

North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles and their enhanced operational capability have become a new level of threat to the region, including Japan, and the international community since 2016.

In 2017, North Korea has repeatedly launched ballistic missiles, including those deemed to be of new type.

**Capability enhancement to respond to ballistic missile attacks**

Japan will appropriately deal with the threat of ballistic missiles by developing its own ballistic missile defense system and by striving to enhance the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements.
Security Situation Surrounding Japan

Scrambles by SDF aircraft exceeded 1,000 times a year for the first time

The number of scrambles reached the highest since the commencement of measures against airspace violations in 1958. Going forward, the SDF will continue to take all possible measures to carry out warning and surveillance activities in waters and airspace surrounding Japan, and implement strict measures against airspace violations in accordance with international law and the SDF Law.

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An aircraft carrier of the Chinese Navy observed in adjacent waters of Japan for the first time

Chinese Navy’s Kuznetsov-class aircraft carrier Liaoning in the central area of the East China Sea was observed for the first time by MSDF. Later, the aircraft carrier Liaoning sailed between the main island of Okinawa and Miyako Island to the Western Pacific. It is also the first time that the Chinese Navy’s aircraft carrier was seen advancing to the Pacific Ocean.

See P. 98, P. 318

The SDF will take all possible measures, including warning and surveillance activities and information collection, in order to expeditiously and seamlessly respond to various situations.
The Japan-U.S. Alliance deepening at various levels

The Japan-U.S. Alliance constitutes the centerpiece for Japan’s security and also functions as “public goods” that contribute to the stability and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large.

Amid the increasingly severe security situation surrounding Japan, the strengthening of the Japan-U.S. Alliance is more important than ever.

Prime Minister Abe shaking hands with U.S. President Trump at the joint press conference (February 2017) (Prime Minister’s Office website)

Japan and the United States discussed and shared concerns over the increasingly severe security situation in the Asia-Pacific region, including the new level of threat from North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles and China’s unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas.
Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting

The Ministers confirmed the importance of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, including the unwavering U.S. commitment to extended deterrence, and also shared the view on the need to further enhance the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance in view of the severe security situation.

Japan-U.S. Joint Training

The MOD/SDF strives daily to enhance Japan-U.S. joint exercises. It believes that bolstering coordination between Japan and the U.S. and demonstrating the ties between the two have the effect of further strengthening the deterrence and response capabilities of the overall Japan-U.S. Alliance and demonstrating the high capability of Japan towards the stabilization of the region.
Terminating engineering activities to move on to a new phase

During the past more than five years, the SDF conducted repairs of arterial roads extending from Juba, the capital city, to various areas of the country and other activities, which represent the largest achievement among Japan’s previous PKO activities. Thus, it was time to move on to a new phase regarding SDF engineering activities in Juba.

In the period of about five years and four months, the SDF dispatched a total of 3,854 personnel (1st to 11th units).

- **Dispatch period**: Approx. five times as long as the PKO in Cambodia
- **Total no. of personnel dispatched**: Approx. 1.7 times as many as the PKO in Timor-Leste

**Repair of the road connecting to the water intake point on Jabal River (March-April 2016)**

**Repair of the road leading to the main gate of the UN House district (April-October 2016)**

**Road repair between Juba and Koda (February-March 2017)**
 Dispatched to South Sudan

Deploy to UNMISS Headquarters continues

While the activities of the engineering unit have ended, Japan will continue to dispatch SDF personnel to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) Headquarters. Going forward, Japan will proactively contribute to the new stage of South Sudan’s nation-building efforts by continuing and expanding support in a variety of forms, including support for advancing the political process and humanitarian assistance, including food aid.