Chapter 1
Overview

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Defense Policies of Countries

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Part I
Security Environment Surrounding Japan

A North Korean tanker that is strongly suspected of engaging in the act of ship-to-ship cargo transfer, which is prohibited by the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (June 2018)
The security environment surrounding Japan has become increasingly severe, with various challenges and destabilizing factors becoming more tangible and acute. While nations with large military forces are concentrated in this region, a regional cooperation framework in the security realm has not been sufficiently institutionalized. Opaque and uncertain factors such as territorial disputes and reunification issues remain. There has been also a tendency towards an increase in and prolongation of so-called “gray-zone” situations, that is, neither pure peacetime nor contingencies over territory, sovereignty, and maritime economic interests. In addition, there has been a noticeable trend among neighboring countries to modernize and reinforce their military capabilities and to intensify their military activities. In this regard, security challenges and destabilizing factors in the Asia-Pacific region including the area surrounding Japan are becoming more serious.

In particular, North Korea has conducted three nuclear tests including the biggest by far since 2016. It also launched 40 ballistic missiles including those that flew over Japan and intercontinental-range ballistic missiles. North Korea’s military development such as its nuclear and missile development constitute unprecedented, serious and imminent threats to the security of Japan.

China has reinforced its military capabilities without transparency. It also continues its unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas with the backdrop of power based on its unique assertions which are incompatible with the existing order of international law. In addition, China has been unilaterally escalating its operations in the periphery of Japan. These trends have become serious security concerns to the region including Japan and to the international community and continued attention needs to be paid.

Russia has been modernizing its forces including its nuclear capability not only in the Europe region but in the periphery of Japan. It has increased its military activities such as enhancement of military deployment in the Northern Territories and Chishima Islands and close attention needs to be paid to its development.

In addition, emerging global security challenges include regional conflicts growing in complexity, international terrorism becoming more serious, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and securing the stable use of new domains such as maritime, outer space and cyber space.

The security challenges and destabilizing factors in the international community which has these characteristics are complex, diverse, and wide-ranging, and it is becoming ever more difficult for a single country to deal with them on its own. In this context, it is increasingly important for countries which share interests in regional and global stability to cooperate and actively respond to security challenges. Cross-cutting government efforts are also critical to overcome these challenges.

**KEY WORD**

**“Gray-zone” situations**

So-called “gray-zone” situations concisely describe a broad range of situations, that is, neither pure peacetime nor contingencies. For example, conflicting assertions between states, etc., over territory, sovereignty, economic interests including maritime interests, etc., and at the least one party showing physical presence frequently, or attempting or making changes to the status quo in an area related to the dispute by using armed organizations or other means to the extent that it does not constitute an armed attack, in order to appeal a party's assertion or demand or to force acceptance of it.
specific and practical intra-regional coordination and collaboration with a particular focus on non-traditional security fields such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Opportunities for bilateral defense exchanges between countries in the region have increased in recent years. Multilateral security dialogues, including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM Plus), conferences hosted by nongovernmental institutions with the participation of relevant defense ministers, and bilateral and multilateral joint exercises are held. Promoting and developing such multilayered approaches among countries is also important to ensure stability in the region.

Also, views on security and perceptions of threats are different by country. Therefore, a regional cooperation framework in the security realm has not been sufficiently institutionalized, and longstanding issues of territorial rights and reunification continue to remain in the region.

In the Korean Peninsula, the Korean people have been divided for more than half a century, and the faceoff continues between the military forces of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and North Korea. There are issues concerning Taiwan and the South China Sea. Furthermore, with regard to Japan, territorial disputes over the Northern Territories and Takeshima, both of which are inherent parts of the territory of Japan, remain unresolved. On top of this, recent years have seen a continued tendency towards the prolongation of “gray-zone” situations, raising concerns that they may develop into more serious situations in the absence of a clear path towards the resolution of the situations.

In North Korea, it is deemed that following the change of regime that made Chairman of the State Affairs Commission Kim Jong-un the leader of the country, the regime continues to strengthen and tighten its grip to make Chairman Kim Jong-un the sole leader. North Korea is military-focused and deploys a massive military force. It is also furthering its development and operational capabilities of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, and it maintains a large-scale special operations force. Through these activities, North Korea is believed to continue to maintain and strengthen asymmetrical military capabilities.1 In particular, it is regarded that North Korea has further advanced its entire ballistic missile program, including new type ballistic missiles, through technological verification conducted by launching a series of ballistic missiles. Recently, North Korea has not only engaged in research and development of ballistic missiles, but has also intensified activities to increase their operational capabilities, including surprise attack. North Korea has conducted nuclear tests in defiance of calls of restraint from the international community. As for the sixth nuclear test conducted in September 2017, the possibility can’t be denied that it was a hydrogen bomb test as it was estimated to have been about a 160-kiloton yield. Considering the technological maturity reached through the past six nuclear tests, it is possible that North Korea has successfully miniaturized nuclear weapons for warheads and enabled them to be equipped on ballistic missiles. With the passage of time, there will likely be a growing risk that North Korea would deploy ballistic missiles mounted with a nuclear warhead that have ranges covering Japan. North Korea has repeated provocative rhetoric and behavior against related countries including Japan. In 2013, North Korea emphasized that Japan is within the range of its missiles, referring to specific Japanese cities, and in March 2017, North Korea announced that it had launched four ballistic missiles as part of the exercise for striking the bases of the U.S. military forces in Japan. North Korea has repeatedly shown its intention to attack Japan using nuclear weapons as seen in the recent statement of “using nuclear weapon to sink Japan” released by Korean Central Television. Such North Korean military trends, coupled with its provocative words and actions such as threats to missile attack against Japan, constitute a serious and imminent threat to the security not only of Japan but also of the entire region and the international community. North Korea’s abduction of Japanese nationals, a grave issue concerning the sovereignty of Japan and the lives and security of the Japanese people, is yet to be resolved. A solution will require concrete actions by North Korea.

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

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1Asymmetrical military capabilities, in this context, refer to means of attack different from those of an opponent with superior conventional military capabilities. Such measures are exploited to compensate for disadvantages in conventional weapons and troops. Examples include WMDs, ballistic missiles, terrorism, and cyber-attacks.
In particular, China is believed to be making efforts to strengthen its asymmetrical military capabilities to prevent military activities by other countries in the region, denying access and deployment of foreign militaries to its surrounding areas (“Anti-Access/Area-Denial” [“A2/AD”] capabilities), and recently, rapidly materializing large-scale military reforms designed to build its joint operations structure with actual combat in mind. In addition, China is rapidly expanding and intensifying its activities both in quality and quantity in the maritime and aerial domains in the region, including in the East and South China Seas. In particular, China has continued to take assertive actions with regard to issues of conflicts of interest in the maritime domain, as exemplified by its attempts to change the status quo by coercion, and has signaled its position to realize its unilateral assertions without making any compromises.

As for the seas and airspace around Japan, Chinese government ships have routinely and repeatedly intruded into Japan’s territorial waters, and Chinese naval vessels and air forces has further expanded its operations in areas including the waters surrounding and airspace over the Senkaku Islands. In June 2016, a Jiangkai I-class frigate became the first Chinese naval combatant vessel to enter the contiguous zone off the Senkaku Islands and in January 2018, a Shang-class submarine navigating underwater and a Jiangkai II-class frigate each entered the same contiguous zone. This marked the first confirmed case in which a submerged submarine entered into the contiguous zone off the Senkaku Islands. These activities by the Chinese Navy represent an attempt to change the status quo unilaterally using force and escalate the situation one-sidedly. Moreover, they pose a serious concern to Japan. In addition, China has engaged in dangerous activities that could cause unintended consequences, such as its naval vessel’s direction of fire control radar at a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) destroyer, the flight of fighters abnormally close to SDF aircraft, and its announcement of establishing the “East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ)” based on its own assertion, thereby infringing the freedom of overflight.

In the South China Sea, China has continued large-scale and rapid reclamation of multiple features based on China’s unique assertions which are incompatible with the existing international order. The verdict handed down by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague in July 2016 with regard to the case involving China and the Philippines rejected the rights claimed by China in the sea included in the “Nine-Dash Line,” including “historic rights” used as the basis for the “Nine-Dash Line,” and found that China’s activities including land reclamation are illegal. However, China has made it clear that it does not intend to follow this decision. Even today, China is developing, in addition to military facilities such as artillery, various infrastructures that can be used for military purposes including runways, ports, hangars, and radar installations among others, moving ahead with making these features military outposts. In addition, in July and August 2016 after the verdict, Chinese Air Force H-6K bombers conducted “combat patrol flight” in the airspace near Scarborough Shoal, and China's Ministry of National Defense announced that these flights would be “regularized” in the future. This shows that China’s military is expanding activities in the seas and airspace of the South China Sea.

These Chinese activities represent serious security concerns of the region encompassing Japan, and of the international community, and need to be watched out for with intense interest. China is urged to further increase transparency regarding its military and enhance its compliance with international norms. It is a key task to further strengthen mutual understanding and trust by promoting dialogue and exchanges with China, and make further progress on measures to build trust, such as measures to avoid and prevent unintended consequences in the maritime domain.

In Russia, President Vladimir Putin, who has been seeking the revival of Russia as a strong and influential power, achieved reelection to his fourth term in March 2018. It is deemed that Russia has promoted the strengthening of the readiness of its Armed Forces and the development and acquisition of new equipment, while continuing to give priority to its nuclear force.

Even as expenditure cuts are thus made in a wide range of areas, Russia has striven to secure defense spending and has continued to modernize its Armed Forces. Recently, Russia has intensified its military activities not only in the Asia-Pacific region, but also in the Arctic, the Europe
region, the periphery of the United States, and the Middle East, and has been expanding the area of activities.

Specifically, from the perspective of Europe and the United States, Russia is believed to be changing the status quo using force by engaging in so-called “hybrid warfare”\(^2\) in Ukraine which Russia regards as a part of its sphere of influence. This is recognized as not only a strong concern for European countries, but also a global issue that could potentially engulf the entire international community including Asia. Russia is also appearing to be expanding its influence internationally, including through its involvement in the Syria Civil War as a supporter of the Assad regime.

In the Far East, the Russian Armed Forces have conducted large-scale exercises. Russia has unveiled the deployment of coastal (surface-to-ship) missiles in the Northern Territories and has referred to a plan to deploy a division to the Northern Territories or the Chishima Islands, and thus continued attention needs to be paid to Russian military development in the Far East, including the Four Northern Islands.

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

\(^2\) While various explanations have been offered for so-called “hybrid warfare,” in this white paper, the term is used to mean “aggression conducted by methods that are difficult to identify definitively as an ‘armed attack’ based on its outward appearance, involving a combination of non-military means, such as sabotage and information manipulation, and military means which are utilized covertly.”
Fig. I-1-1-1

Major Military Forces in the Asia-Pacific Region (Approximate Strength)

Russia
- 80,000 troops (12)
- 260 vessels - 640,000 tons
- 400 aircraft

China
- 980,000 troops (207)
- 15,000 marines (3)
- 750 vessels - 1,767,000 tons
- 2,850 aircraft

North Korea
- 1,100,000 troops (33)
- 780 vessels - 111,000 tons
- 550 aircraft

ROK
- 490,000 troops (54)
- 29,000 marines (3)
- 240 vessels - 215,000 tons
- 640 aircraft

Japan
- 140,000 troops (15)
- 135 vessels - 488,000 tons
- 400 aircraft

U.S. Forces in the ROK
- 15,000 troops (5)
- 80 aircraft

Taiwan
- 130,000 troops (15)
- 10,000 marines (3)
- 390 vessels - 295,000 tons
- 500 aircraft

U.S. Forces in Japan
- 21,000 troops (1)
- 150 aircraft

U.S. 7th Fleet
- 30 vessels - 400,000 tons
- 50 (carrier-based) aircraft

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