In the area surrounding Japan, there is a concentration of nations with large-scale military capabilities, and a regional cooperation framework on security has not yet to be fully institutionalized, leading to the existence of uncertainty and unclarity, including the persistence of territorial disputes and unification issues.

Meanwhile, there has been 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 economic interests.

There has also been a noticeable trend among neighboring countries to modernize and reinforce their military capabilities and to intensify their military activities. The security challenges and destabilizing factors in the Asia-Pacific region are characterized below:

1. North Korea’s military development such as nuclear weapon and ballistic missile development represents an unprecedentedly serious and imminent threat.
2. The unilateral escalation of China’s military activities poses a strong security concern for the region including Japan and international community.
3. Russia has tendency to intensify its military activities, including in areas surrounding Japan, and this trend needs to paid due attention.

Territorial disputes over the Northern Territories and Takeshima, both of which are inherent parts of the territory of Japan, remain unresolved.

Recent Security Related Issues around Japan

Global Security Environment

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 space, cyberspace, and outer space.
## United States

### The Trump Administration’s Security Policy

| 2 | Within these documents, the Trump Administration cites the following three types of main challengers competing with the United States and states the main security concern of the United States is not terrorism, but rather long-term strategic competition with China and Russia. |
|   | - China and Russia: Revisionist powers |
|   | - Iran and North Korea: Rogue states |
|   | - Jihadist terrorists: Transnational threat organizations |
| 3 | Given this recognition, the United States emphasizes maintaining military superiority, its commitments to the Indo-Pacific Region, and strengthening relations with allies. |

### Nuclear Strategy and Missile Defense Policy

| 1 | In terms of nuclear posture, in the near term the United States will modify a small number of existing SLBM warheads to provide a low-yield option, and in the long term, pursue a modern nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles. |
| 2 | As for the country’s missile defense posture, the United States plans to reinforce both mainland defense and regional defense as well as work on the development of cutting edge technologies, in order to respond the threat of not only ballistic missiles, but also cruise missiles and other weapons systems. |

### Indo-Pacific Strategy

| 1 | The United States champions a vision of promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific in the Indo-Pacific Region. |
| 2 | This vision calls for the following U.S. policies: |
|   | - North Korea’s nuclear and missile development: while maintaining negotiations with North Korea on denuclearization, keep sanctions until denuclearization becomes apparent, and continue to maintain presence of the United States Forces Korea. |
|   | - China’s maritime advances: remain involved in the free and lawful use of the seas through the Freedom of Navigation Operations, while not tolerating unilateral changes in the status quo. |
North Korea

1. Since 2016, North Korea has willfully conducted three nuclear tests and launched as many as 40 ballistic missiles. These military trends in North Korea pose an unprecedentedly serious and imminent threat to Japan’s security, and significantly damage the peace and security of the region and the international community.

2. In the joint declaration at the first-ever U.S.-North Korea Summit Meeting in June 2018, North Korea gave a commitment to work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and confirmed that it plans to continue the negotiations between the two sides. It is highly significant that Chairman Kim Jong-un reiterated his intention for the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and made a clear promise to do so in a written document.

3. It is important to closely monitor specific actions by North Korea to eliminate nuclear and missile capabilities.

4. Taking into consideration the fact that North Korea appears to possess and deploy several hundred Nodong missiles capable of reaching almost every part of Japan as well as advancements in the development and operational capabilities of nuclear weapons and missiles through repeated nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches to date, there is no change in our basic recognition concerning the threat of North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missiles.

Development of WMD and Ballistic Missiles

1. North Korea willfully conducted its sixth nuclear test in September 2017. The yield of the weapon is estimated at around 160kt, making it the largest yielding test to date. It is difficult to deny the possibility that it was a hydrogen bomb test.

2. Considering the technological maturity estimated to have been achieved through these six nuclear tests, it is possible that North Korea has already achieved the miniaturization of nuclear weapons and has developed nuclear warheads so that nuclear weapons can be loaded into ballistic missiles.

3. As for whether North Korea has demonstrated warhead reentry technologies, while detailed analysis is necessary, North Korea can be accumulating related technologies through its repeated missile launches.

4. North Korea is suspected to have several facilities capable of producing chemical agents and already a substantial stockpile of such agents. North Korea is also thought to have some infrastructure for the production of biological weapons. The possibility cannot be denied that North Korea is able to load biological and/or chemical weapons on ballistic missiles.
In terms of ballistic missiles, North Korea appears to be aiming to (1) advance long-range ballistic missiles’ technological reliability, (2) enhance the accuracy and operational capabilities necessary for saturation attacks, (3) improve its ability to conduct surprise attacks, and (4) diversify the forms of launches.

If North Korea advances further in development of ballistic missiles and other activities and overconfidently and wrongly believes that it has obtained strategic deterrence against the United States, there is possibility of increased and more serious military provocations in the region and could lead to circumstances that raise strong concerns for Japan.

Note 1: The figure above shows a rough image of the distance each missile can reach from Pyongyang for the sake of convenience.

Note 2: Quotation marks indicate the names used by North Korea.
Underpinned by high level of increases in defense budget, China is considered to reinforce its military capabilities broadly and rapidly with a focus on nuclear and missile force, as well as its Navy and Air Force. As part of this China has been strengthening its so-called A2/AD capabilities.

Besides this type of strengthening military capabilities from past years, China is pursuing new types of practical operational capabilities, such as those of electronic and cyber warfare, in recent years.

Considering Xi Jinping’s further consolidation of authoritative power as Chairman of the Central Military Commission, China’s military modernization to improve practical operational capabilities can be accelerated more strongly in the future.

China aims to realize fundamental modernization of its military forces, namely the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), by 2035 and transform the PLA into one of the world’s top militaries by the middle of the 21st century, intending to rapidly enhance its military capabilities in accordance with its increasing national strength.

China’s sea and air power is expanding its operational areas, including the area around Senkaku Islands, undertaking further activities which are seemingly based on its own claim regarding the islands.

China is considered to attempt to routinize its naval ships’ navigation in waters close to Japan and its presumable sea and air power’s training activities which accompany entry into the Pacific Ocean. At the same time, the quality of its activities is showing continuous improvement, including a pursuit of developing practical joint operational capability.

Sufficient attention should be paid to issues regarding China’s offshore platforms.
China’s attempts to change the status quo by coercion

1. China, over maritime issues where its interests conflict with others’, continues to act in a way which can be considered assertive, such as attempts at changing the status quo by coercion.

2. China has pressed ahead with rapid and large-scale land reclamation on seven features in the Spratly Islands, installing military facilities such as artillery batteries, and transforming these features into military installations. Furthermore, China is promoting militarization of the Paracel Islands too, as bomber takeoff and landing exercises are pointed out to be implemented, for example. China’s military activities in South China Sea are expanding, and the expansion itself is to change the status quo by coercion and to promote the changed status as an accomplished fact.

3. The United States is conducting Freedom of Navigation Operations in the waters such as South China Sea to cope with over-claiming of maritime interests, including one by China.

4. However, China is exhibiting interest in initiatives to avoid and prevent unexpected contingency in the sea and airspace. For example, in May 2018, Japan and China officially agreed to implement “Maritime and Aerial Communication Mechanism between the Defense Authorities of Japan-China.”

5. Nevertheless, China’s rapid modernization of the PLA, enhancement of operational capabilities, and unilateral escalation of activities in areas close to Japan, without sufficient transparency, are generating strong security concerns in the region and international community, including Japan.

6. It is probable that the PLA plays a backing role in Belt and Road Initiative through its activities such as sea lane protection. In addition, development of infrastructure under the initiative can lead to further expansion of the PLA’s activities in the area such as the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean.

An image of the PLA’s recent activities in the sea and airspace around Japan

Examples of the PLA Navy and Air Force confirmed around Japan (photos: MSDF/ASDF)

- Shang-class submarine
- Luyang III-class destroyer
- H-6 bomber
- Su-30 fighter

Bomber advances all the way to the area off the Kii Peninsula (August 2017)

Frequent advancements into the Pacific Ocean passing between Okinawa and Miyako Island

Carrier-based fighter (presumed) flights in the Pacific Ocean (April 2018)

Underwater submarine and destroyer’s intrusions into the contiguous zone off the Senkaku Islands (January 2018)

The PLA Navy and Air Force’s activities in the East China Sea

Air power actively advances into the Sea of Japan

China-Russia joint exercise (Joint Sea 2017)

*Locations, wakes, etc. include images and estimates.*
President Putin, who has called for Russia to become a strong and influential nation, was re-elected in March 2018. With regards to Russia's future, he emphasized to further bolster its defense capability, while stating his commitment to pursue constructive relations with other countries without the intention of starting an arms race.

With regards to Europe, Russia is negative about the expansion of NATO, and has deployed three divisions near the border with Ukraine etc, and conducted the large-scale training exercise Zapad-2017 in September last year.

As for Syria, Russia announced naval and air bases in Syria will continue to operate on a permanent basis. Attention will continue to be paid to Russia's moves to expand its influence in the Middle East.

In the Far East, Russia has been developing its newest class of frigate (Steregushchiy class) and fighter jets (Su-35 and Su-34). In 2018, Russia also plans on holding a large-scale military exercise called Vostok-2018.

Russia announced deployment of surface-to-ship missiles in the Northern Territories (Etorofu and Kunashiri islands), and it is also intensifying activities in Etorofu island, including designation of a civilian airport to both civilian and military use and deployment of fighters.

Russia tends to increase its military activities, including in areas near Japan, and it is necessary to closely observe this trend.

**Trends in Regional Conflicts and International Terrorism**

1. ISIL has lost nearly all of the territory it once controlled as a result of military operations by the U.S.-led coalition and local forces. However, ISIL-affiliated groups continue to actively carry out terrorist attacks in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

2. The threat for terrorism is spreading globally, including “homegrown” terrorism perpetrated by individuals or groups who are inspired by extremist ideologies and foreign terrorist fighters returning to their countries of origin after fighting for ISIL.

3. It is essential for Japan to once again address the threat of international terrorism head-on in light of ISIL’s repeated reference to Japanese people as targets of attack and the attack in Dhaka (Bangladesh) in 2016.

4. In the Syrian theater, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France concluded that the Assad regime used chemical weapons and carried out attacks on Syria’s chemical weapon facilities. Related countries and various forces remain in conflict, as seen in strong criticism of this action by Russia, a key supporter of the Assad regime. There is still no end in sight to military clashes in Syria.
Outer Space

1. Major countries are making efforts to enhance the capabilities of a variety of satellites and launch them for the purpose of enhancing C4ISR* functions. (*The term “C4ISR” stands for command, control, communication, computer, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.)
2. Countries are rapidly developing capabilities in outer space for securing their own military superiority in outer space. It is pointed out that China and Russia have been developing anti-satellite weapons such as killer satellites.
3. It is pointed out that China could threaten U.S. information superiority in outer space in the future.

Cyberspace

1. As military dependence on information communication networks grows further, cyber attacks are regarded as an asymmetrical strategy capable of exploiting the weaknesses of an adversary’s forces. Many foreign militaries develop their capability to execute cyber attacks.
2. It has been pointed out that China and Russia are reinforcing their military’s cyber attack capabilities in order to disrupt networked units and destroy infrastructure.
3. Cyber attacks are frequently carried out against information and communications networks of government organizations and military forces of various countries. It is suggested that government organizations of countries such as China, Russia, and North Korea are involved in those attacks.