The SDF persistently engages in warning and surveillance activities in the water and airspace surrounding Japan during peacetime so that it can respond to various contingencies immediately and seamlessly. Information gathered through these activities are shared with other relevant government agencies.

Suspicion Illegal Transfer of Goods at Sea (Ship-to-ship Transfer) by North Korea-related Vessels

1. As part of its warning and surveillance activities in the water surrounding Japan, the SDF gathers information on vessels suspected of violating the UN Security Council resolutions.

2. Up to the end of June 2018, the SDF has confirmed and made public activities that were highly likely to be illegal transfers of goods at sea (so-called “ship-to-ship transfer”) by North Korea-related vessels.

3. In order to conduct warning and surveillance by aircraft and such against illegal activities at sea including “ship-to-ship” transfer, Australian and Canadian patrol aircraft were deployed to Japan for about a month from the end of April in 2018. British Royal Navy’s frigate HMS Sutherland engaged in information gathering operations in the high seas surrounding Japan in early May.

Warnings and Emergency Takeoffs (Scrambles) in Preparation against Intrusion of Territorial Airspace

1. The ASDF detects and identifies aircraft flying in the airspace surrounding Japan using warning and control radars as well as early-warning and control aircraft. If any suspicious aircraft heading to Japan’s territorial airspace are detected, fighters and other aircraft scramble to approach them in order to confirm the situation and monitor them as necessary.

2. In 2017, the ASDF scrambled 904 times. Among these, 500 were against Chinese aircraft, and 390 were against Russian aircraft.

Number and Breakdown of Scrambles since the Cold War

Note: The peak during the Cold War
In order to respond to attacks on remote islands, it is important to position units and so forth in accordance with the security environment, and also to detect signs at an early stage through Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) conducted by the SDF as well as obtaining and securing maritime and air superiority. Initiatives taken by the MOD/SDF include the following.

Enhanced Defense Posture in the Southwestern Region
1. GSDF: Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade was newly established in March 2018. (Security units will be positioned on Amami Oshima, Miyako Island, and Ishigaki Island.)
2. MSDF: Acquired equipment including fixed wing patrol aircraft P-1 and SH-60K rotary wing patrol helicopters.

Securing Capabilities for Swift and Large-scale Transportation and Deployment
Enhanced rapid deployment capabilities through the improvement of transport LST and the introduction of V-22 Ospreys and C-2 transport aircraft.

Response to Ballistic Missile Attacks
1. Japan’s Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) is based on an effective multi-tier defense system with upper tier interception with Aegis-equipped destroyers and lower tier with Patriot PAC-3, both interconnected and coordinated by the Japan Aerospace Defense Ground Environment (JADGE).
2. In order to defend Japan, at all times, it is necessary to drastically improve ballistic missile defense capabilities. Therefore, the National Security Council and the Cabinet approved in December 2017 the introduction of two land-based Aegis System (Aegis Ashore) to be operated by the GSDF.
3. The introduction of Aegis Ashore will reinforce upper tier interception Aegis-equipped destroyers.

Build-up and Operational Concept of BMD (image)
Response in Outer Space ► P. 329

1. There is a growing threat against the stable use of outer space such as the rapid increase of space debris.
2. The MOD/SDF launched an X-band defense communications satellite called Kirameki-2 in January 2017, and another one named Kirameki-1 in April 2018, to be used for the information communications of extremely important command and control in unit operations.

Response in Cyber Space ► P. 332

1. With regard to cybersecurity, the number of cases recognized as threats to Japanese governmental organizations in FY2016 reached approximately 7,110,000, and these threats have become increasingly serious.
2. In order to appropriately deal with cyber attacks, the MOD has increased the number of personnel in the SDF units responsible for responding to cyber attacks approximately from 350 to 430.

Response to Large-scale Disasters ► P. 335

- When natural disasters occur, the SDF works in collaboration with local governments, engaging in various activities such as the search and rescue of disaster victims or missing ships or aircraft, offering medical treatments and preventing epidemics. There were 501 disaster-related dispatches in 2017.

Response to Rescue and Transport of Japanese Nationals Overseas and Others ► P. 339

- The SDF stands ready to dispatch its units swiftly. Specifically, the SDF maintains operational readiness by which the GSDF designates units including a helicopter unit, the MSDF designates vessels such as transport ships, and the ASDF designates airlift units. In addition, the SDF strengthens its joint operational capability through exercises in and outside Japan.

Efforts for Civil Protection ► P. 343

- With cooperation from relevant government organizations, the MOD/SDF has held training with participation of local governments, etc. In addition, the MOD/SDF also actively participates and cooperates in civil protection training implemented by local governments.
Active Promotion of Security Cooperation

The MOD/SDF will enhance bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation and exchanges, and will more actively promote United Nations Peace Keeping Operations (UN PKO), counter-piracy operations, international peace cooperation activities, and other relevant missions to address global security issues.

Initiatives under the Multilateral Security Framework and Dialogues

1. 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 exchanges in the areas of security and defense.

2. 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.

Capacity Building Assistance

1. Through the capacity building assistance program launched in 2012, Japan has provided assistance in various areas such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, PKO, maritime security, and international law to 14 countries and 1 organization mainly in the Asia-Pacific region.

2. Between January and March, and October and December 2017, Japan provided assistance programs for the Djiboutian Armed Forces to help strengthen its disaster response capability, including training on the operation of facilities and equipment.

Multilateral Joint Training

- In the Asia-Pacific region, the MOD/SDF actively participates in multinational training in non-traditional security fields, such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, as well as Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO), in addition to conventional training conduct in preparation for combat situations.

Promotion of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Other Countries

1. As for defense cooperation and exchanges, Japan will continue its effort to alleviate any conditions of confrontation and tension, as well as fostering a collaborative and cooperative atmosphere through bilateral dialogues and exchanges.

2. 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).
Ensuring Maritime Security

1. For Japan, a maritime state, strengthening order on the seas based on fundamental rules, such as the rule of law and the freedom of navigation, as well as ensuring safe maritime transport, is the foundation for peace and prosperity, which is extremely important.

2. In cooperation with the relevant countries, the MOD/SDF engages in counter-piracy operations and promotes various initiatives including assistance for capacity building in this field for those coastal states alongside the sea lanes, and makes the most of various opportunities to enhance joint training and exercises in waters other than those in the immediate vicinity of Japan.

3. For counter-piracy operations, the SDF surface force and air force have participated in the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151) and conducted its missions in cooperation with other countries. Furthermore, the SDF dispatched a CTF 151 commander from March to June 2018.

Efforts for International Peace Cooperation Activities

The MOD/SDF is proactively undertaking international peace cooperation activities working in tandem with diplomatic initiatives, including the use of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for resolving the fundamental causes of conflicts, terrorism, and other problems.

International Conferences etc. with regard to UN Peacekeeping Operations

1. The MOD hosted the Tokyo preparatory meeting for the UN Peacekeeping Defense Ministerial Meeting in August 2017.

2. At the UN Peacekeeping Defense Ministerial Meeting held in Canada in November 2017, State Minister of Defense Yamamoto announced that Japan would further contribute to the “UN Project for African Rapid Deployment of Engineering Capabilities” and take initiatives to increase the number of female PKO personnel.

United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)

1. Japan continues to dispatch SDF personnel to UNMISS Headquarters although the SDF engineering unit was withdrawn at the end of May 2017.

2. Japan will continue to contribute to activities as UNMISS members.

Dispatch of MOD personnel to UN Secretariat

1. The uniformed SDF personnel are dispatched to PKO centers overseas as instructors, and administrative officials as well as the uniformed SDF personnel are dispatched to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the UN Department of Field Support.

2. GSDF personnel have been dispatched as instructors to the UN Project for African Rapid Deployment of Engineering Capabilities. So far, until last year the dispatched GSDF personnel here provided 6 training sessions on the operation of heavy equipment for about 170 personnel participants from 8 countries in Africa.
Establishing a New Benefit to Ensure Understanding and Cooperation for Duties of SDF Reserve Personnel and Others.

- A new system was introduced in FY 2018 in order to gain understanding and cooperation from the companies that employ SDF Reserve Personnel or SDF Ready Reserve Personnel for their duties. In the new system, a special benefit is provided to the companies in case the employed SDF Reserve Personnel or SDF Ready Reserve Personnel: 1) responds to orders such as defense operation, civil protection or disaster relief dispatch orders; 2) must miss their civilian jobs due to injuries sustained while on duty.

Safety Management Initiatives

- Any incident that can cause injury to the public, damage to its property, or the loss of life of SDF personnel, must be avoided at all costs. The MOD/SDF makes a united and full effort to prevent the same incidents from happening again by conducting a thorough investigation as to the cause of incidents and ensuring each SDF personnel is committed to safety management.

Working Style Reform

- The MOD/SDF is going forward with working style reform to promote work-life balance through initiatives such as holding “Competition for initiatives to promote Working Style Reform at the Ministry of Defense” in 2017, and also taking full effect of telework in the Internal Bureau of the MOD head office.

Reform to Realize a Successful Career with Childrearing and Nursing Care.

1. A workplace nursery was newly opened at Ichigaya district where the MOD is located in April and within National Defense Medical College in October 2017.

2. As for the re-employment of SDF personnel who left the SDF mid-career, the system was reassessed in January 2017 to welcome back personnel who retired mid-career due to childrearing and nursing. Their re-employment began in January 2018.

Establishment of High-quality Medical Care System

- Establish an efficient and high-quality medical care system through measures such as improving operation of the National Defense Medical College Hospital, etc., as well as promoting consolidation, upgrade, etc. of SDF hospitals.

Secure and Train Personnel, Enhance Capabilities

- More emphasis will be placed on securing and training medical officers and nurses, etc. Further, strengthen the first aid capabilities on the frontline as well as the abilities to respond to infectious diseases.
Measures on Defense Equipment and Technology

Promotion of Research and Development for Ensuring Technological Superiority

The MOD formulated the Defense Technology Strategy in August 2016, which presents a specific direction for various measures that should be implemented strategically. This aims to ensure Japan’s technological superiority, develop advanced equipment in an effective and efficient manner, and deal with various policy issues pertaining to defense and civilian technologies.

Additionally, the MOD formulated the Medium-to Long-term Defense Technology Outlook for future technologies expected to be established in the next 20 years and the Research and Development Vision that presents the concept of future equipment and the R&D roadmaps. The MOD promotes a variety of measures based on these documents.

33 proposals have been selected by the end of JFY 2017 in the “Innovative Science & Technology Initiative for Security” (funding program), which aims to discover inventive and promising research at research organizations and corporations.

Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation

Based on the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, Japan promotes cooperation in defense equipment and technology with other countries in order to contribute to the national security of Japan, the promotion of peace and international cooperation, and the maintenance and enhancement of defense production and technological bases. The most recent initiatives include the following:

- Five MSDF TC-90 training aircraft were granted to the Philippine Navy.
- Japan decided to grant the GSDF UH-1H spare parts and maintenance equipment to the Philippine Air Force.
- The MSDF P-1 patrol aircraft was displayed and gave the first demonstration flight at ILA Berlin 2018.
- Bilateral Defense Industry Forum began (with the participation of Indonesia, India, Vietnam and Australia in FY2017).
- The MOD has been carrying out technology cooperation with the U.K. and started the very first cooperative research with France.

Interaction with Local Communities and Japanese Citizens

Collaboration with Local Communities

The MOD/SDF conducts a variety of cooperation activities such as the disposal of unexploded ordnance and mines to support civilian life. Such activities further deepen the trust between local communities/people and the SDF, as well as significantly contribute to the maintenance and vitalization of local communities.

Various Public Relations Activities

The MOD/SDF widely publicizes current circumstances of the SDF both at home and abroad through various information communication platforms including Social Networking System (SNS) and events such as the SDF Marching Festival, a troop review, a fleet review, and an air review.

Initiatives for Information Disclosure and Management of Public Documents

In light of the issue of the daily reports related to the PKO in South Sudan and the daily reports in Iraq, the MOD/SDF is committed to regaining trust of the public by thoroughly implementing measures pertaining to information disclosure and management of public documents to prevent similar incidents.