China has continued to reinforce its military capabilities both in quality and quantity. It has also continued its attempts to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas, including the Senkaku Islands, which are inherent parts of the territory of Japan, and has intensified its activities in the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan.

The second U.S.-North Korea summit was held, but there has been no change in the situation that North Korea possesses and deploys several hundred ballistic missiles capable of reaching every part of Japan. North Korea also continues illegal transfers of goods at sea (so-called “ship-to-ship transfer”) through increasingly sophisticated methods in such areas as the East China Sea.

Russia carried out “Vostok 2018” in the Eastern Military District. The United States and Russia remained far apart regarding the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty; following the United States’ announcement of withdrawal, the treaty lost effect in August 2019.

The exercise was conducted on the largest scale since 1981, with participation of nearly 300,000 soldiers, including those from the Chinese and Mongolian militaries.

Russia’s deployment of Su-35 fighters to Etorofu Island
Near collision of U.S. and Chinese military vessels in the South China Sea
First ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)-China joint maritime exercise
(from October) NATO’s exercise Trident Juncture conducted on the largest scale in recent years
U.S. President Trump ordering establishment of a U.S. Space Command
Heavy rain in July 2018 (call-up of Ready Reserve Personnel)
Japan-Japan “2+2” meeting
Signing of the Japan-France Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (Japan-France ACSA) (from October) NATO’s exercise Trident Juncture conducted on the largest scale in recent years
U.S. President Trump ordering establishment of a U.S. Space Command

Japan-China defense ministerial meeting was held for the first time in three years, and the ministers agreed on early establishment of a hotline concerning the Maritime and Air Communication Mechanism between Japanese and Chinese defense authorities.

The GSDF conducted lifesaving operations, water and food supply assistance, and bathing assistance, engaging approximately 25,000 personnel, nine vessels, and 46 aircraft at the maximum.

An air transport unit was dispatched in response to the earthquake and tsunami that occurred near Sulawesi Island, and transported relief materials and affected people.
In Japan, the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) conducted activities in response to the 2018 Hokkaido Eastern Iburi Earthquake and other natural disasters. In addition, it promptly responded to disasters outside Japan, such as transporting relief materials as the Japan Disaster Relief Team when an earthquake and tsunami occurred in Indonesia.

As the first “Internationally Coordinated Operations for Peace and Security,” the deployment of two personnel dispatched as staff officers to the Multinational Force Observers (MFO) began in April 2019.

The United Nations (UN) Project for Rapid Deployment of Enabling Capabilities/Asia and the surrounding regions was carried out for the first time.

In line with the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, the SDF actively engages in defense cooperation and exchanges, leveraging its defense capability, such as conducting joint training and exercises with and providing capacity building assistance to the countries within the region.

The United Nations (UN) Project for Rapid Deployment of Enabling Capabilities/Asia and the surrounding regions (November to December)

The second U.S.-North Korea summit (February)

China’s international fleet review (April)

China Coast Guard vessels repeatedly intruding into Japan’s territorial waters near the Senkaku Islands

China, which aims to beef up its military capacity, unveiled its new 10,000-ton class Kaga-class destroyer at an international fleet review.