Direction of Defense Capability Transformation (1)

March, 2026

Japan Ministry of Defense

Stand-off Defense Capabilities

March 2026
Japan Ministry of Defense

Positioning of Stand-off Defense Capabilities

- **Stand-off missiles** enable **responses from long distances while ensuring the safety of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) personnel** against vessels, landing forces, etc. invading Japan, including island areas.
- Various stand-off missiles with differing characteristics **enable multilayered responses by Japan and compel the adversary to take complex countermeasures, thereby reducing the likelihood of an armed attack against Japan itself.**
- Furthermore, by responding from outside the adversary's threat range, **attacks against Japan can be effectively deterred while ensuring the safety of SDF personnel.** Together with unmanned defense capabilities, **this is key to securing response capabilities amid Japan's declining population.**

Initiatives to date for domestically developed stand-off missiles (examples)

Equipment (Conceptual images)	2023 R5	2024 R6	2025 R7	2026 R8	2027 R9	2028 R10	2029 R11	2030 R12	2031 R13	2032 R14	Launch platform
Upgraded Type-12 SSM (Surface-launched)	Planned to be developed and tested										Ground launcher
			Start of mass production	Planned to be deployed							
Upgraded Type-12 SSM (Ship-launched)	Planned to be developed and tested										Destroyer
			Start of mass production			Planned to be operated					
Upgraded Type-12 SSM (Air-launched)	Planned to be developed and tested										F-2
						Planned to be operated					
Hyper Velocity Gliding Projectile	Planned to be developed and tested										Ground launcher
			Start of mass production	Planned to be deployed							
Hypersonic Missile	Planned to be developed and tested										Ground launcher
				Start of mass production (planned)							

Lessons Learned from the Aggression Against Ukraine

■ With regard to stand-off missiles, lessons learned from the aggression against Ukraine indicate that **combining them with attack UAVs** and **response to prolonged warfare** will be challenges going forward.

Response to Prolonged Warfare

✓ With **prolonged warfare** in mind, it is necessary to work to **ensure and maintain sufficient capabilities** in stand-off defense capabilities as well.

- ➢ Based on the assumption that all types of equipment and ammunition will be consumed in large quantities, the scale and capabilities of the defense industry will become even more important.

Image of a mass-producible missile (Flamingo (Ukraine))

Combining Missiles and Attack UAVs

✓ **Large numbers of cruise missiles and attack UAVs impose continuous costs on the adversary's air defense network.**

✓ **Combining them with high-performance missiles enables effective combat operations.**

- ➢ The combination of stand-off missiles and attack UAVs is effective in intercepting vessels and other targets at an early stage and from long distances.

Attack UAV (Shahed Drone)

Direction of Consideration

■ Stand-off defense capabilities should continue to be regarded as important capabilities in strengthening defense capabilities. Taking into account the **new forms of warfare observed in the aggression against Ukraine** and the need to **more effectively disrupt attacks against Japan while ensuring the safety of SDF personnel**, focused consideration will be given to the areas below.

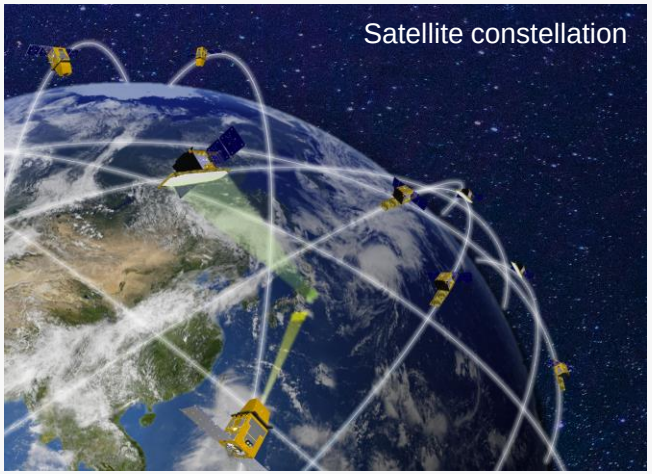
Main Items for Consideration

- Strengthening targeting capabilities for the practical operation of stand-off missiles
- Achieving efficient responses through the combination of stand-off missiles and unmanned assets, etc.
- Securing capabilities that can respond to prolonged warfare

[Examples of equipment contributing to stand-off defense capabilities]


Hyper Velocity Gliding Projectile for the defense of remote islands


Upgraded Type-12 surface-to-ship missile


Satellite constellation

Integrated Air and Missile Defense

March, 2026
Japan Ministry of Defense

(Photo: Japan Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF))

Strengthening of Air and Missile Capabilities by Neighboring Countries, Etc.

■ The air and missile capabilities of neighboring countries, etc. **have continued to grow stronger** since the formulation of Japan's current three strategic documents in 2022.

- ✓ North Korea continues to launch ballistic missiles. In an attempt to penetrate missile defense systems, it has also launched **what it calls "hypersonic missiles"** as well as **short-range ballistic missiles that fly at low altitude on irregular trajectories**.
- ✓ China is **strengthening its anti-ship ballistic missiles, etc.** and **advancing the development and deployment of hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs),** which are more difficult to intercept, in order to enhance its so-called Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities.
- ✓ Russia is **developing new weapons, including HGVs.**

【Examples of developments by neighboring countries, etc. since 2023】

North Korea

- North Korea launched a total of **52** ballistic missiles, etc. between 2023 and 2025.
- Launches included ICBM-class missiles as well as missiles flying on irregular trajectories and those described as "hypersonic missiles."

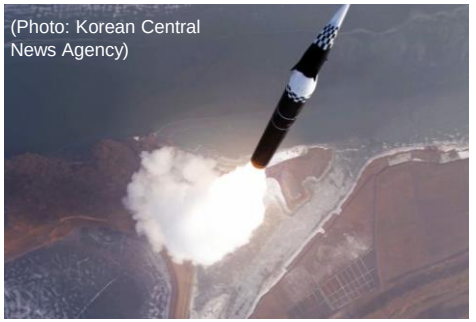
China

- It is estimated that China currently possesses more than **3,000** ground-launched missiles with ranges exceeding 300 km.
- China is also steadily strengthening its air capabilities, including fifth-generation fighter aircraft.

Russia

- Russia has launched more than **13,300** ballistic and cruise missiles to Ukraine (as of January 2026).
- Russia has used new weapons, including the hypersonic cruise missile Zircon, in combat.

[Examples of air and missile capabilities of neighboring countries, etc.]



▲ Ballistic missile described by North Korea as a "hypersonic missile"

▲ North Korean ICBM-class ballistic missile

▲ Chinese H-6 bomber

▲ Russian Tu-95 bomber

Air Defense Combat in Aggression Against Ukraine

- Ukraine has **built multilayered air defense capabilities** composed of various means ranging from expensive Patriot systems to inexpensive anti-aircraft guns. In addition, by dispersing air defense units and deploying decoys, Ukraine has **significantly reduced the effectiveness of Russian air attacks.**
- Meanwhile, Russia has conducted **large-scale attacks by combining unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and missiles**, forcing a **continuous burden on Ukraine's air defense capabilities**. Russia has also **attacked critical infrastructure** such as electric power facilities **and civilian facilities**.
  - **Air defense combat has taken on the character of a war of attrition**, with Ukraine facing shortages of air defense missiles.
  - Ukraine has reduced civilian casualties through measures such as delivering alerts to smartphones and developing shelters.

[Diverse air defense systems used by Ukraine[1]]

Patriot surface-to-air missile (max range approx. 35 km)

NASAMS surface-to-air missile (max range approx. 20–40 km)

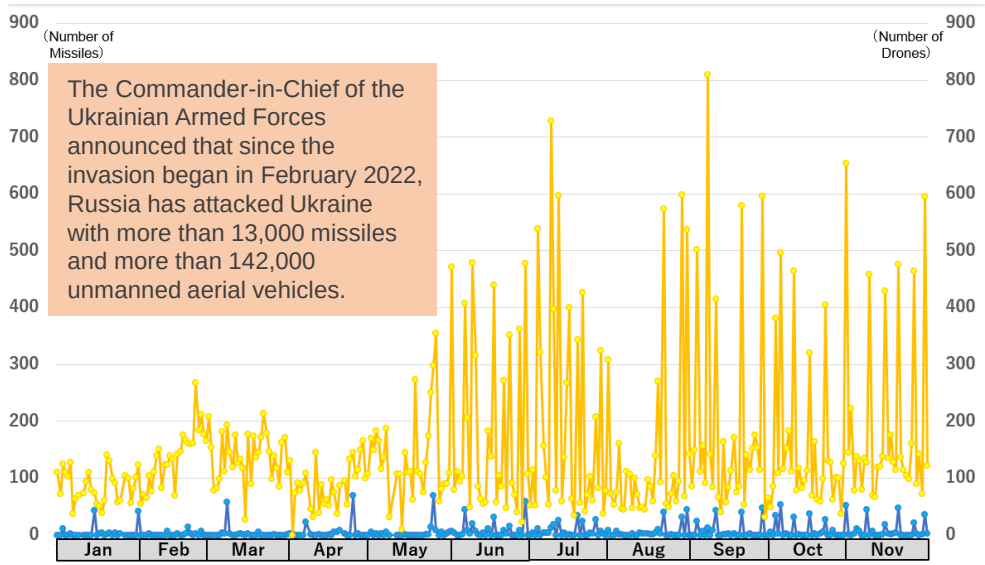
Stinger man-portable air defense system (max range approx. 5 km)

Gepard self-propelled anti-aircraft gun (max range approx. 5.5 km)

Sting interceptor UAV

Kvertus Ad Counter FPV Backpack F3U portable electronic warfare system

[Trends in the number of missile and UAV attacks by Russia]



(Source: Ukrainian Air Force announcement)

1. Maximum ranges are based on publicly available information.

Direction of Consideration

■ Because air defense capabilities are critical factors that affect the overall course of a conflict, and taking into account the lessons learned from the battlefield in Ukraine, focused consideration will be given to the items below in order to ensure the defense of Japan.

Main Items for Consideration

- Development of interception capabilities against new threats such as HGVs and drones
- The best mix of air defense measures that includes not only direct interception but also dispersion, deception, and the networking of air defense assets
- The quantity of assets and munitions necessary to sustain air defense operations even if combat becomes prolonged

[Examples of equipment contributing to integrated air and missile defense]

Defense of Pacific Theater and Sea Lanes

March, 2026
Ministry of Defense

(Photo: MSDF)

Why is “Defense of Pacific Theater and Sea Lanes” Important Now?

- As a nation surrounded by the sea on all sides, Japan depends on overseas imports via sea lanes for most of the raw materials used for the necessities of life, including clothing, food, and shelter. The sea lanes leading to Japan **span vast maritime areas including the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic Oceans**, and **many of them ultimately converge in the Western Pacific**.
- In addition to ensuring the stable use of sea lanes in general, maintaining conditions in which civilian vessels can safely navigate, particularly in the Pacific, is indispensable not only for the activities of the SDF but **also for sustaining the daily lives of the Japanese citizens**. Recent examples of armed conflict have also shown that **instability in sea lanes** can have **serious effects on a country’s logistics as a whole**, including energy and food supplies, **and on international logistics overall.**

【Examples of dependence on overseas resources[1]】

Transportation

- Of Japan’s total trade volume, 99.5% is transported by sea (2024, tonnage basis)

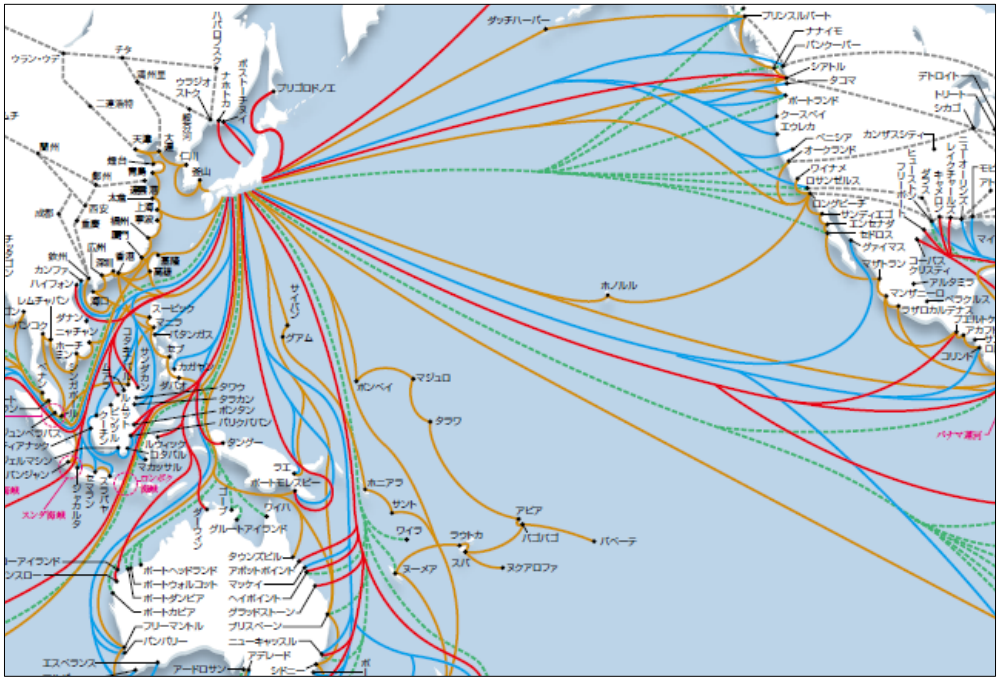
Fossil fuels

- Japan depends on imports for nearly 100% of its oil, coal, and LNG.
- Crude oil imports rely heavily on the Middle East, while coal and LNG imports rely heavily on Australia.

Food

- 62% of Japan’s food supply (calorie basis) comes from overseas imports.
- The top exporting countries are the United States, Australia, Canada, and Brazil.

【Major maritime routes in the Pacific Ocean[2]】

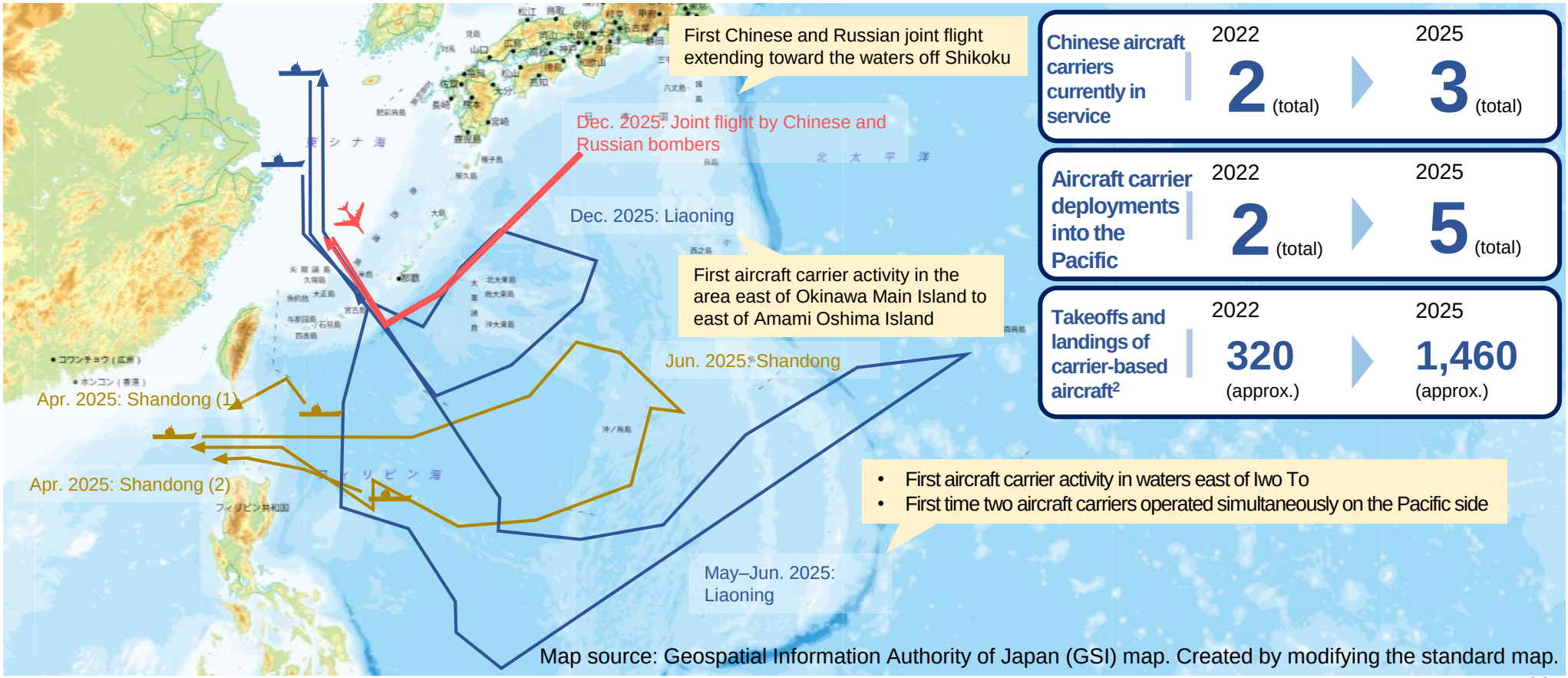


1. Sources of the data are as follows: Transportation: “MLIT Maritime Bureau Annual Report 2025,” Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism; Fossil fuels: Energy White Paper 2025,” Agency for Natural Resources and Energy; Food: “Annual Report on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas FY 2024,” Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
2. Source: Japan’s Shipping: SHIPPING NOW 2025–2026, edited by the Japan Maritime Public Relations Center. The image has been partially modified for reference.

Military Activities of Neighboring Countries in the Pacific Theater

- Both before and after the formulation of Japan's current three strategic documents in 2022, **military activities by neighboring countries on Japan's Pacific side have continued to intensify**.
  - ✓ China has **steadily improved its ability to conduct operations in distant maritime and air domains**. It has deployed aircraft carriers into the Pacific and conducted takeoffs and landings of carrier-based aircraft. In recent years, **the frequency of such activities has increased and the scope of operations has expanded**.
  - ✓ Russia has deployed bombers into the Pacific side together with China.

[Activities of Chinese aircraft carriers and Chinese/Russian bombers in the Pacific: 2025[1]]



	2022	2025
Chinese aircraft carriers currently in service	2 (total)	3 (total)
Aircraft carrier deployments into the Pacific	2 (total)	5 (total)
Takeoffs and landings of carrier-based aircraft[2]	320 (approx.)	1,460 (approx.)

Map source: Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (GSI) map. Created by modifying the standard map.

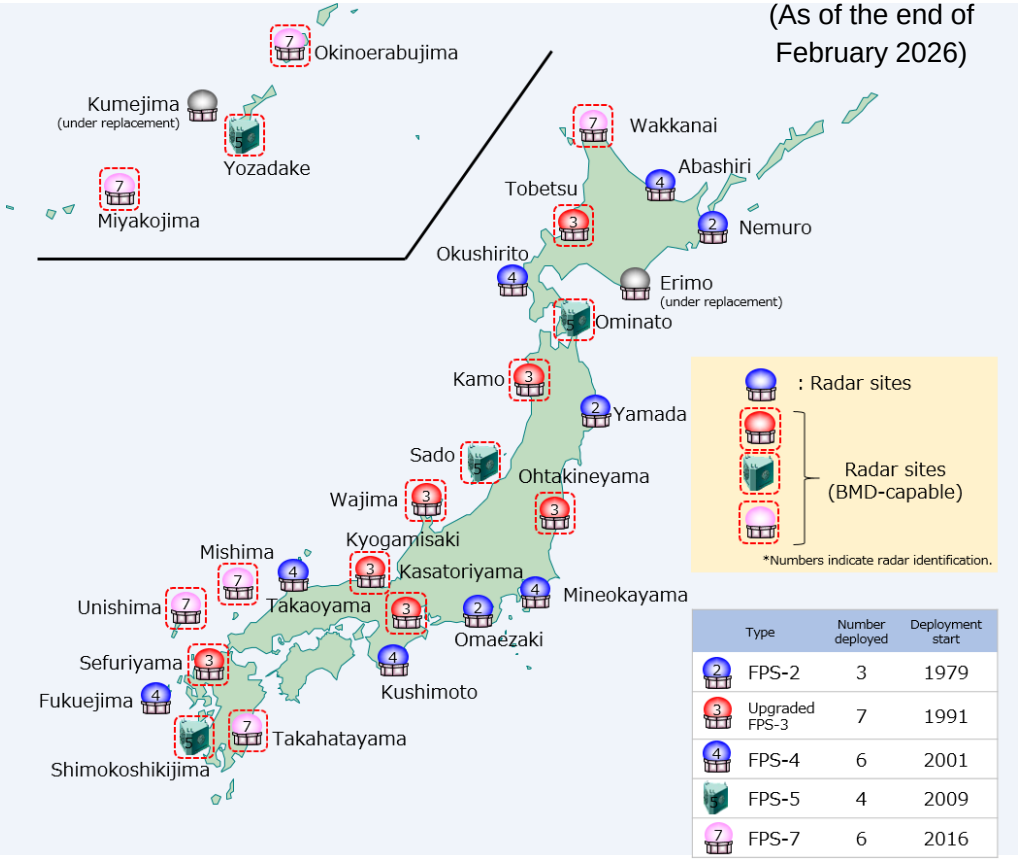
1. The activity overview is based on Joint Staff press releases. Some details have been simplified in the preparation process. 2. Total number of carrier-based aircraft takeoffs and landings in the Pacific as reported in Joint Staff press releases.

Defense Architecture Challenges in the Pacific

- At present, there are no radars over the Pacific that continuously monitor the airspace at all times. Therefore, the Ministry of Defense (MOD)/SDF have **limited capabilities for information gathering and surveillance**.
- The MOD/SDF are advancing initiatives such as deploying mobile warning and control radars to islands on the Pacific side, including Kitadaitojima, **but further strengthening the defense architecture on the Pacific side is an urgent issue**.

[Deployment of warning and control radars]

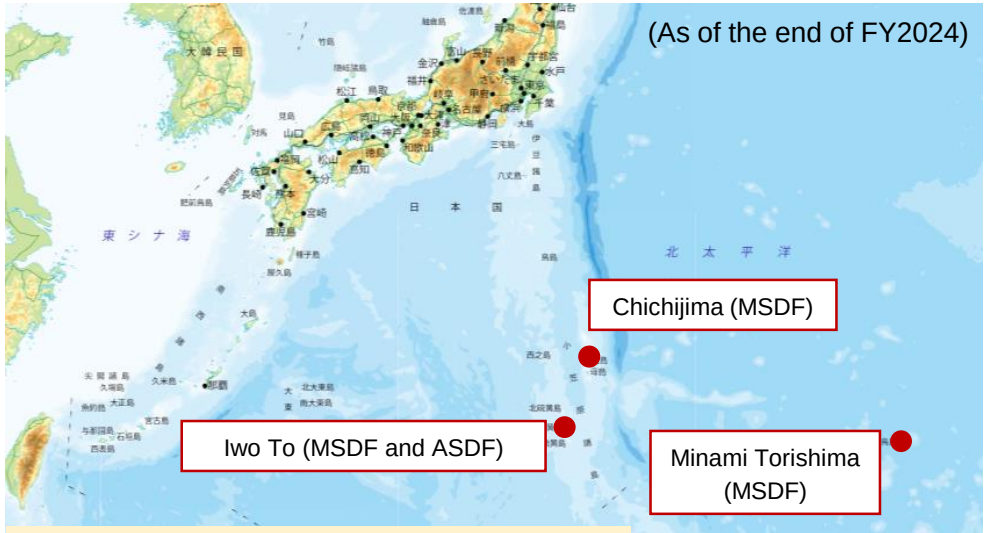
(As of the end of February 2026)



Type	Number deployed	Deployment start
FPS-2	3	1979
Upgraded FPS-3	7	1991
FPS-4	6	2001
FPS-5	4	2009
FPS-7	6	2016

[SDF bases in the Pacific]

(As of the end of FY2024)



[Units stationed]
Iwo To: Iwoto Air Station (MSDF), etc. (approx. 290 personnel)
Iwoto Air Base Group (ASDF) (approx. 110 personnel)
Chichijima: Chichijima Base Facility (approx. 20 personnel)
Minami Torishima: Minamitorishima Auxiliary Air Facility (approx. 10 personnel)

Map source: GSI map. Created by modifying the standard map.

Direction of Consideration

■ In order to strengthen Pacific theater and sea lanes defense capabilities and thereby safeguard not only the activities of the SDF but also the foundations that enable Japan's socio-economic activities to continue, focused consideration will be given to the areas below.

Main Items for Consideration

- Strengthening continuous and persistent information gathering and surveillance capabilities
- Strengthening defense capabilities of Pacific theater
- Strengthening operational capabilities over wide areas
- Strengthening cooperation with Japan's ally and like-minded countries

[Examples of equipment contributing to defense of Pacific theater and sea lanes]

Upgraded Type-12 surface-to-ship missile (GSDF)

(Photo: Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency)

P-1 fixed-wing patrol aircraft (MSDF)

(Photo: MSDF)

F-2 fighter aircraft (ASDF)

(Photo: ASDF)