Cognitive Warfare and Strategic Communications (p. 1)
Intelligence-related Functions (p. 5)
Virtuous Cycle between Defense and the Economy (p. 9)

June 2026

Ministry of Defense

Cognitive Warfare and Strategic Communications

Current State of Cognitive Warfare and Strategic Communications
(Examples of Cognitive Warfare in Russia's Aggression against Ukraine)

Russia

Use of fake accounts

- ✓ Russia created sophisticated impersonation websites designed to resemble credible Western media outlets and disseminated fabricated articles through fake social media accounts.

> "Ukrainians are shelling their own cities."
>
> "NATO will abandon Ukraine."

Use of fake videos, including deepfakes

- ✓ The dissemination of a fabricated video showing President Zelenskyy calling for surrender

> Although Ukraine swiftly refuted the claims, the video temporarily created confusion and skepticism.

Ukraine

Strategic communications targeting domestic and international audiences

- ✓ Ukraine established the Centre for Strategic Communication and Information Security (SPRAVDI), which is responsible for monitoring disinformation, and has proactively advanced counter-disinformation measures and strategic communications.
- ✓ In cooperation with advertising agencies, Ukraine implemented a branding strategy lauding the bravery of the Ukrainian people.
- ✓ Provided real-time information on the aggression through official Ukrainian Government-affiliated accounts.

Support and participation by private entities

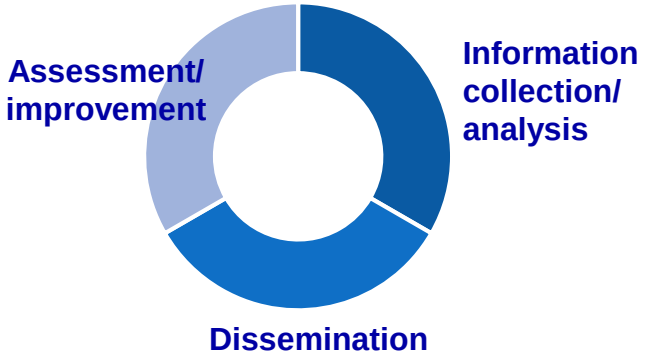
- ✓ Private companies and NGOs supported Ukraine through activities such as cyber defense and fact-checking.
- ✓ Civilian-led open-source intelligence (OSINT) communities also participated in efforts to counter Russia's influence operations.

Approach to Cognitive Warfare and Strategic Communications

Issue

Advances in AI and other technologies may accelerate the spread of disinformation, making it increasingly challenging to counter cognitive warfare. Should **a cycle for countering cognitive warfare be established** to **promote countermeasures**?

Cycle for countering cognitive warfare



Approach

Recognizing that many Ministry of Defense (MOD)/Self-Defense Forces (SDF) activities convey strategic messages and may constitute a component of cognitive warfare, the MOD/SDF should cultivate an information environment desirable for national security during peacetime and employ it as a strategic asset during contingencies.

Accordingly, the MOD/SDF will build upon the efforts of wide-ranging departments, and, in particular, **strengthen strategic information dissemination functions**. The MOD/SDF will also **enhance** the underlying **information collection, analysis, and assessment functions** and their **supporting infrastructure**.

Direction of Consideration Related to Cognitive Warfare and Strategic Communications

Ongoing efforts

Strengthening information collection structures and functions

Expanding the Defense Intelligence Headquarters' structure (FY2024 to present)

Established a dedicated department for information

Expanding the SDF services' structures (FY2025 to present)

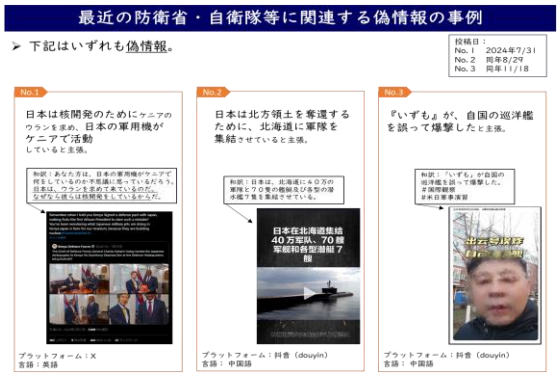
Established information warfare units to enhance information warfare capabilities at the unit level

Enhancing means of collecting information (FY2024 to present)

Introduced social media analytics tools

Strengthening information dissemination functions

Increasing accurate disseminations and societal resilience



Direction of consideration

○ Strengthening Structures for Information Dissemination

- Enhance societal resilience against statements that undermine the reputation of Japan's activities, while **proactively and multilayeredly disseminating** the necessity and legitimacy of Japan's defense policies and initiatives **to domestic and international audiences** in coordination with Japan's ally and like-minded countries on a regular basis in order to secure support from the international community.
- **Ensure rapid response to the spread of disinformation**
- In coordination with relevant ministries and agencies, **strengthen the structures for cognitive warfare-related dissemination**, including strategic communications, necessary to realize these efforts.

○ Utilization of AI across the Cycle from Information Collection to Information Dissemination

- **Collect large volumes of open-source information widely and efficiently** from social media and other sources.(OSINT)
- While **appropriately incorporating the latest technologies** and **actively leveraging external expertise**, **utilize AI** throughout the entire cycle from information collection to information dissemination.


Intelligence-related Functions

Current State of Intelligence-related Functions

Importance of Intelligence

Improves the quality of decision-making (Data-based objective assessments)	Competitive advantage (Formulate strategies ahead of adversaries and weaken their decision-making)
Enhances risk management (Early detection and mitigation of potential risks)	Efficient resource allocation (Optimization of unit operations, etc.)

- Intelligence contributes to identifying strategic indicators and warning signs for deterring aggression. <u>The competition to achieve intelligence superiority begins in peacetime</u>.
- Intelligence has value, giving advantage to decision-making in both policy formulation and unit operations. <u>Intelligence determines the success or failure of national defense</u>.

Approach to Intelligence-related Functions

Issue

- In light of the increasing importance of intelligence due to the intensifying activities of neighboring countries, alongside rapid innovations in AI and communications technologies, the MOD/SDF needs to further enhance its intelligence-related functions.
- The MOD/SDF also needs to contribute to enhancing intelligence functions across the Government.

Approach

- **Ensure and strengthen seamless, multilayered intelligence-related functions that support national defense, and enhance overall intelligence-related functions by further reinforcing cross-organizational information-sharing mechanisms.**
- **As the foundation for these efforts, fundamentally reinforce Japan's information security posture.**

Direction of Consideration for Intelligence-related Functions

Main ongoing efforts

Development of imaging satellite constellation

Full-scale operations to commence at the end of FY2027

Deployment of signals intelligence aircraft (RC-2)

Following the deployment of the first aircraft, preparing to complete a four-aircraft fleet by the end of FY2030.

Direction of consideration

Strengthening intelligence-related functions

- To strengthen Japan's broad-area and multilayered intelligence collection posture: develop intelligence collection networks in the Southwestern region and along the Pacific side
- To strengthen intelligence-related functions that support national defense: enhance those contributing to targeting for the exercise of stand-off defense capabilities, e.g., imagery satellite constellation
- To make the most use of collected and analyzed intelligence: strengthen cross-organizational information-sharing mechanisms and promote initiatives that leverage private-sector expertise, AI, and other advanced technologies

Reinforcing the information security posture

- Digitalize manual information security procedures to minimize human error and increase automation and efficiency
- Establish an information security posture that will not disrupt field operations in both peacetime and contingencies

Realizing a “Virtuous Cycle between Defense and Economy”

The Need to Realize a "Virtuous Cycle between Defense and the Economy"

Why is a "virtuous cycle between defense and the economy" important?

○ **Reinforcing Japan's defense capabilities** requires strengthening uniquely Japanese responses in light of the "new ways of warfare," as well as sustained operational capability.

○ As the distinction between civilian and defense technologies becomes increasingly blurred, **it is indispensable to reinforce production and technological bases in the dual-use domain**.

○ This will **enable the realization of a "virtuous cycle between defense and economy,"** where (1) investment in defense capability reinforcement enhances competitiveness in domestic and international civilian markets, and (2) production and technological bases, strengthened through the acquisition of domestic and international civilian markets, leads to improvements in both the quality and quantity of defense equipment.

How will the reinforcement of defense capabilities contribute to a "virtuous cycle"?

○ Defense projects have characteristics that distinguish them from civilian projects:

(1) **Domestic development and production are important** for ensuring sustained operational capability, ownership and autonomy.

(2) Domains such as unmanned assets, space, cyber, and AI are key to implement uniquely Japanese responses in light of the "new ways of warfare."
→ These fields overlap with **those anticipated to grow by leveraging Japanese strengths**.

(3) The MOD conducts R&D of defense equipment and acquires them.
→ This generates a capacity to supply new technologies and services, while **creating sustained demand**.

(4) The MOD develops, operates, and improves defense equipment on its own.
→ **Technologies and services are upgraded and made more sophisticated together with suppliers**.

(5) The MOD employs numerous personnel, bases, camps, training areas, and maritime and air domains to demonstrate and operate technologies and services.
→ These resources function as **demonstration infrastructure** that are **difficult for the private sector to replicate**.

○ By leveraging these characteristics, **defense capability reinforcement can become a major driver of a "virtuous cycle between defense and economy."**

Types of Projects that Contribute to a "Virtuous Cycle between Defense and the Economy"

(1) MOD-led R&D of dual-use technologies and services (spin-off)

⇒ By conducting R&D of advanced technologies based on Japan's defense needs and requirements, the MOD contributes to private companies' creation of domestic products and services that are competitive in civilian and international markets.

Satellite constellation

(2) MOD-driven adoption of dual-use technologies and services (spin-on)

⇒ By incorporating civilian-origin technologies and services into the defense sector, the MOD accelerates their deployment in the civilian sector, product and service improvement, and market expansion.

Digital twin

(3) Provision of infrastructure essential for R&D of dual-use technologies and services

⇒ By giving access to testing and demonstration infrastructure required for defense-related R&D and using them in partnership with universities, national research institutes, and companies that can contribute to the defense sector, the MOD supports civilian-sector R&D in cutting-edge science and technology.

Test wind tunnel

(4) Strengthening the business foundation of promising startups

⇒ Contracts, investments, and other forms of support from the MOD help startups enhance their credibility and attract private financing.

Defense Innovation Meeting

(5) Economic infrastructure protection by applying the SDF's cyber defense capabilities

⇒ Initiatives such as continuous threat hunting contribute to protecting civilian-sector economic infrastructure that is necessary for the SDF's operations.

Locked Shields 2026

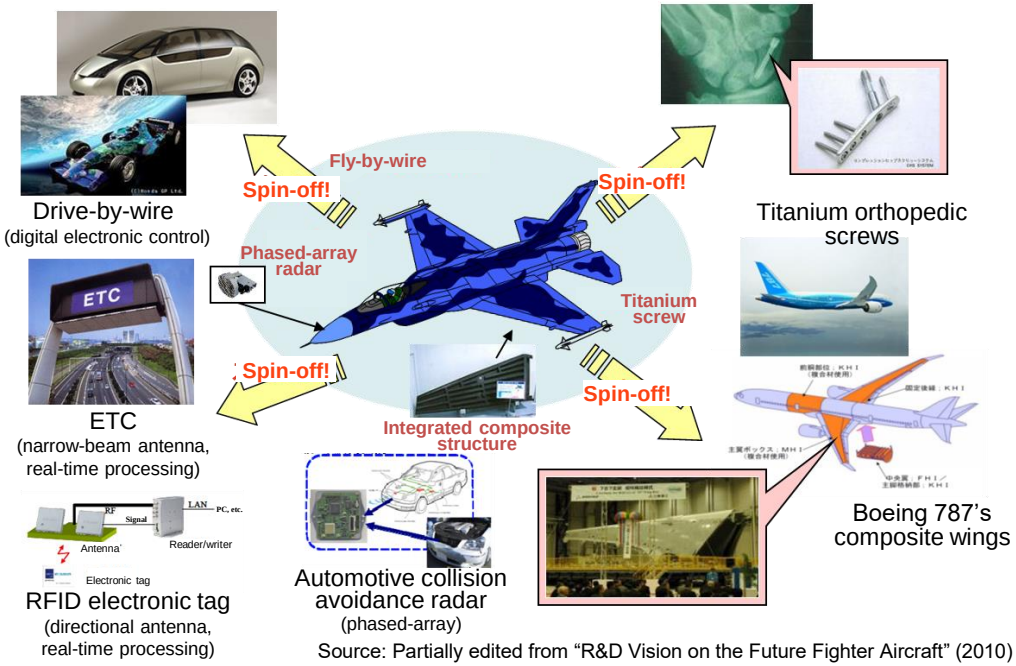
Direction of Consideration for a “Virtuous Cycle between Defense and the conomy”

In the course of reinforcing the required defense capabilities, the MOD/SDF will realize a “virtuous cycle between defense and economy” and transform public perceptions of defense capability reinforcement.

- **Allocate resources to priority areas**, such as for strengthening uniquely Japanese responses in light of the “new ways of warfare,” and sustained operational capability.
- **Actively find and partner with companies possessing advanced technologies**, including regional startups.
- **Work together with relevant ministries and agencies** to expand defense needs-driven domestic and international markets into civilian markets.
- **Build an R&D ecosystem** connecting the MOD with startups in the defense industry, national research institutes, universities, etc.

● Example of past development of the F-2

The new technologies introduced in the F-2 at the time could be applied to civilian sectors and generated spillover effects.



Source: Partially edited from “R&D Vision on the Future Fighter Aircraft” (2010) in Japanese.