

On the Publication of Defense of Japan 2019



河野太郎

Minister of Defense
KONO Taro

My name is Taro Kono. I took office as the Minister of Defense on September 11, 2019.

In order to ensure that the new Reiwa era will be a peaceful period, I will do my utmost to defend Japanese national's life and property by maintaining Japan's peace and security and by contributing to the effort to secure the peace and stability of the international community.

During the period covered by the 2019 version of the Defense White Paper, the Ministry of Defense (MOD)/the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) made new developments related to defense policy, including the formulation of the National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2019 and beyond (NDPG) and the Mid-Term Defense Program (FY2019-FY2023; MTDP), and dealt with various incidents under the leadership of former Minister of Defense Takeshi Iwaya. Therefore, he was also invited to offer his words on the publication of this white paper.

We hope that Japanese nationals will take a look at the Defense White Paper and feel more familiar with the MOD/SDF.



岩屋毅

Former Minister of Defense
IWAYA Takeshi

On May 1 this year, the Reiwa era began. This year not only marks the beginning of a new era; it is important for the MOD/SDF, as we will start to develop defense capabilities for a new age based on the National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2019 and beyond (NDPG) and the Mid-Term Defense Program (FY2019-FY2023; MTDP) that were formulated in December last year. The MOD/SDF will continue to make every possible effort to perform tasks in order to preserve the peace and independence of Japan in this new era.

The security environment surrounding Japan is becoming more testing and uncertain at a remarkably faster speed than we expected. One particularly prominent change is the rapid expansion of the military

use of domains such as space, cyberspace and electromagnetic spectrum. As a result of technological innovation in recent years, these domains are gaining as much importance as the conventional domains of land, sea and air. As for the regional situation, China is expanding and stepping up its activities in the seas and airspace neighboring Japan, with more and more fighters and bombers advancing to the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean. North Korea still maintains hundreds of ballistic missiles which cover the whole of Japan within their range in combat deployment. The series of short-range ballistic missile launches into the Sea of Japan since May indicates North Korea's intent to advance relevant technologies even after the US-NK leaders met three times, which we cannot overlook.

The most important point in preserving the peace and independence of Japan in this severe security environment is our own effort. Under the NDPG and the MTDP, we will fundamentally strengthen our own defense structure. In doing so, we intend to develop a "multi-domain defense force" that fuses the new domains of space, cyberspace and electromagnetic spectrum with the traditional domains of land, sea and air.

The Japan-U.S. Alliance, along with Japan's own defense system, forms the cornerstone of Japan's security. The range of fields where Japan and the United States should cooperate with each other is expanding in accordance with the changing security environment. Since becoming Minister of Defense, I have had five Japan-U.S. defense ministerial meetings, where we had candid discussions. By deepening cooperation at all levels, from the summit level to the working level, we must strive to further strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. At the same time, we will make efforts to mitigate the impact of bases on Okinawa and other host communities while maintaining the deterrence capability of the U.S. Forces in Japan.

In addition, in order to realize the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" vision, it is important to further strengthen security cooperation with other countries while working together with the United States. We intend to promote multi-faceted, multi-layered security cooperation among Australia, India, ASEAN countries and others in a strategic manner.

At the beginning of the Defense White Paper for this year, a feature article titled "National Defense Program Guidelines for FY2019 and beyond (NDPG)" provides explanations, using pictures and charts, concerning the security environment and the strengthening of the defense system described in the NDPG. In order to help readers deepen their understanding, the main body of the white paper includes column articles providing clear explanations, in addition to a detailed description of the overview of the NDPG and the MTDP.

At the beginning of the Reiwa era, looking back at the Heisei era, it was a period when the security environment surrounding Japan changed dramatically. For example, Japan experienced the end of the Cold War at the beginning of the era, followed by a series of natural disasters, the increased tension over North Korea's situation, the simultaneous terrorist attacks in the United States and the rise of China. In this situation, we evolved the defense policy through such measures as participating in peacekeeping operations in Cambodia and elsewhere, developing the Contingency Legislation, dispatching SDF personnel to Iraq, and developing the Legislation for Peace and Security. For this year's Defense White Paper, we have prepared an opening feature titled "MOD/SDF in the Heisei Era: A Look Back on Activities over the Past 30 Years" which helps readers to look back at the activities conducted by the MOD/SDF during the Heisei era. I hope you will enjoy it.