

Section
2

Ensuring Maritime Security

The NDPG states that for Japan, a maritime nation, strengthening the order of “Open and Stable Oceans” based on fundamental norms, such as the rule of law and the freedom of navigation, as well as ensuring safe maritime and air transport, is the foundation for its peace and prosperity, which is extremely important. From this viewpoint, the MOD/SDF will promote assistance that contributes to improving capabilities pertaining to the maritime security

of coastal states in the Indo-Pacific region, such as India, Sri Lanka, and other South and Southeast Asian states. Moreover, Japan is promoting such activities as joint training and exercises, unit-to-unit exchanges, and active port visits on these occasions. Japan is also promoting activities such as anti-piracy efforts in cooperation with relevant countries and cooperation for strengthening the capabilities of the Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA).

1 Initiatives towards Ensuring Maritime Security

(1) The Fundamental Idea of the Government

The National Security Strategy (NSS) states that as a maritime state, Japan will play a leading role, in maintaining and developing “Open and Stable Sea,” which are upheld by maritime order based upon such fundamental principles as the rule of law, ensuring the freedom and safety of navigation and overflight, and peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with relevant international law, rather than by force.

The third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy was given Cabinet approval in May 2018. Taking a broad view of ocean policy from the perspective of security on the ocean, the Plan states that the government will act as one in undertaking “comprehensive maritime security.”

For this purpose, the government will undertake securing of the national interest in the territorial water of Japan and stable use of its important sea lanes.

Furthermore, the government will further strengthen its efforts toward enhancement of MDA that collects and summarize a variety of maritime information from ships, aircraft, etc. in order to use the information for measures regarding the sea.

Concerning the COC, which China and ASEAN are continuing to discuss, Japan has expressed its position that the COC should conform with international law including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and not infringe on the legitimate rights and interests of all parties of the South China Sea.

(2) Initiatives of the MOD/SDF

The MOD/SDF is conducting counter-piracy operations to secure stable use of sea lanes and information gathering activities to ensure the safety of Japan-related vessels in the Middle East. In the ADMM-Plus in November 2019, Defense Minister Kono stated his strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo and intimidation of other countries, urging for the demilitarization of the disputed terrain and the peaceful resolution of the conflict in accordance with the UNCLOS. Within the framework of the Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS), the MSDF has been engaged in initiatives such as cooperation in the establishment of the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES).

2 Counter-Piracy Operations

1 Significance of Counter-Piracy Operations

Piracy is a grave threat to public safety and order on the seas. In particular, for Japan, which depends on maritime transportation to import most of the resources and food necessary for its survival and prosperity as a maritime nation, it is an important issue that cannot be ignored. The Japan

Coast Guard (JCG), one of the law enforcement agencies in Japan, is primarily responsible for coping with piracy. However, in cases where it is deemed extremely difficult or impossible for the JCG to cope with piracy by itself, the SDF is to take action as well.

For Japan and the international community, the waters off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden are extremely

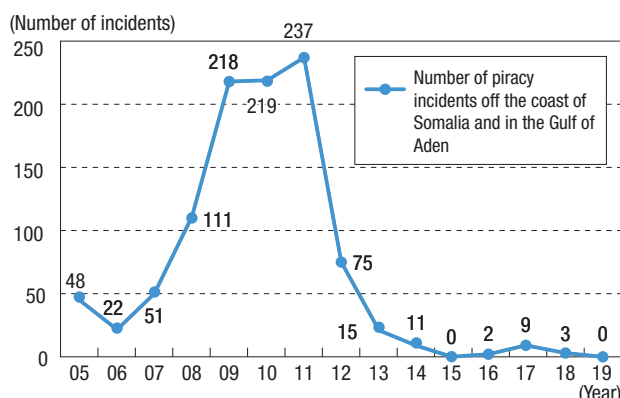
important sea lanes, connecting Europe and the Middle East with East Asia. Successive UN Security Council resolutions¹ were adopted, such as UN Security Council Resolution 1816, which was adopted in June 2008 in response to the frequent occurrence of and rapid increase in the piracy incidents with the purpose of acquiring ransoms by detaining hostages caused by pirates, who are armed with machine guns and rocket launchers. These resolutions have requested that various countries take actions, particularly the dispatch of warships and military aircraft, to deter piracy in the waters off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden.

To date, approximately 30 countries, including the United States, have dispatched their warships to the waters off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. As part of its counter-piracy initiatives, the EU has been conducting Operation Atalanta since December 2008, in addition to the counter-piracy operations conducted by the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151)² that was established in January 2009. Meanwhile, other countries have been dispatching their assets to the area.

As these initiatives by the international community have proved to be effective, the number of acts of piracy occurring in the waters off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden has currently hovered at a low level. However, the assumed root causes of piracy such as terrorism and poverty in Somalia have still remained unsolved. In addition, considering the fact that Somalia's capability to crack down on piracy is also still insufficient, if the international community reduces its counter-piracy efforts, the situation could be easily reversed. Therefore, there is no great change in the situation in which Japan must carry out its counter-piracy operations.

Fig. III-3-2-1

Piracy Incidents Off the Coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden



Notes: The data is based on a report by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

Q See

Part II, Chapter 5, Section 1-3-3 (Counter-Piracy Operations)
Fig. III-3-2-1 (Piracy Incidents Off the Coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden)

2 Japanese Initiatives

(1) Legislation Concerning Counter-Piracy Operations

In March 2009, following the order for Maritime Security Operations for the purpose of protecting Japan-affiliated vessels from acts of piracy in the waters off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, two destroyers³ began providing direct escort to Japan-affiliated vessels, while P-3C patrol aircraft also commenced warning and surveillance operations in June of the same year.

Japan subsequently enacted the Anti-Piracy Measures Act⁴ in July of the same year. This act made it possible to protect the vessels of all nations from acts of piracy, regardless of their flag states. Moreover, it also enabled the use of weapons to a reasonable extent, if no other means were available, in order to halt vessels engaging in acts of piracy, such as approaching civilian vessels.

Furthermore, the Act on Special Measures concerning the Security of Japanese Flagged Vessels in Areas that Are Highly Susceptible to Acts of Piracy came into force on November 2013, which made it possible to have security guards on board a Japanese ship provided certain requirements are met, enabling them to carry small arms for the purpose of security operations.

Q See

Reference 10 (Conditions Required for Main Operations of the Self-Defense Forces (Including Diet Approval) and Authority for the Use of Weapons Concerning Main Operations of the Self-Defense Forces)



MSDF personnel leaving for counter-piracy operation off the Coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden (November 2019)

¹ Other UN Security Council resolutions calling for cooperation in deterring piracy are: Resolutions 1838, 1846, and 1851 (adopted in 2008), Resolution 1897 (adopted in 2009), Resolutions 1918 and 1950 (adopted in 2010), Resolutions 1976 and 2020 (adopted in 2011), Resolution 2077 (adopted in 2012), Resolution 2125 (adopted in 2013), Resolution 2184 (adopted in 2014), Resolution 2246 (adopted in 2015), Resolution 2316 (adopted in 2016), Resolution 2383 (adopted in 2017), Resolution 2442 (adopted in 2018) and Resolution 2500 (adopted in 2019).

² The Combined Maritime Force (CMF), the headquarters of which is located in Bahrain, announced the establishment of the CTF in January 2009 as a multilateral combined task force for counterpiracy operations.

³ The number of destroyers was changed to one from December 2016.

⁴ Official title: Acts on Punishment of and Measures against Acts of Piracy

(2) Activities by the SDF

a. Dispatch of the Deployment Surface Force for Counter Piracy Enforcement (DSPE) and Other Units

The SDF dispatches the DSPE, the Deployment Air Force for Counter Piracy Enforcement (DAPE), and the Deployment Support Group for Counter Piracy Enforcement (DGPE) to carry out counter-piracy operations.

The DSPE strives to ensure the safety of ships navigating in the area in two different manners – direct escort of private vessels across the Gulf of Aden, and zone defense in allocated areas in the Gulf of Aden, by using destroyers (one destroyer dispatched). There are JCG officers aboard the destroyer.⁵

The DAPE conducts counter-piracy activities using the P-3C patrol aircraft (two aircraft dispatched). The unit conducts warning and surveillance operations in the flight zone that is determined in coordination with the CTF 151 Headquarters and confirms any suspicious boats. At the same time, the unit also provides information to the MSDF destroyers, the naval vessels of other countries and civilian vessels, responding by such means as confirming the safety of the surrounding area immediately, if requested. The information gathered by MSDF P-3Cs is constantly shared with other related organizations, and contributes significantly to deterring acts of piracy and disarming vessels suspected as pirate ships.

In order to improve the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the DAPE, the DGPE carries out activities such as maintenance of the facility set up in the northwest district of Djibouti International Airport.

In addition, the Airlift Squadron regularly operates ASDF transport aircraft to carry out air transport of materials required by the DAPE and the DGPE.

In late April, although COVID-19 had spread in Djibouti, in order to conduct regular inspection and maintenance of P-3C patrol aircraft in Japan, a substitute P-3C was dispatched after closely coordinating with related authorities and implementing thorough measures to prevent infection.

b. CTF 151 Deployed Unit at the Headquarters

In order to strengthen coordination with the units of other countries engaged in counter-piracy operations and enhance the effectiveness of the SDF's counter-piracy operations, the MOD has dispatched SDF personnel to the CTF 151 Headquarters since August 2014. During the period from May to August 2015, the SDF also dispatched a CTF 151

commander for the first time, while between March and June 2017, March and June 2018, and February and June 2020, a CTF 151 commander as well as staff were also dispatched to the Headquarters.

c. Achievements

As of March 31, 2020, the DSPE has escorted 4,027 vessels. Under the protection of the SDF destroyers, not a single vessel has come to any harm from pirates and these vessels have all passed safely across the Gulf of Aden.

As of May 31, 2020, the DAPE has conducted the following activities: aircraft have flown 2,486 missions with their flying hours totaling 18,570 hours; and information was provided to vessels navigating the area and other countries engaging in counter-piracy operations on around 14,600 occasions. The activities conducted by the DAPE account for approximately 70 to 80% of the warning and surveillance operations carried out in the Gulf of Aden by the international community.

 See Fig. III-3-2-2 (SDF's Counter Piracy Operations [Image])
Fig. III-3-2-3 (Structure of the Deployed Forces)

3 Praise for Japan's Endeavors

The counter-piracy operations by the SDF have been highly praised by the international community. For example, national leaders and others have expressed their gratitude and the SDF has also been repeatedly well-received by the UN Security Council Resolution. Moreover, the MSDF destroyers, which are engaging in counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, has received many messages from the captains and ship owners of the vessels that its units have escorted, expressing their gratitude that the ships were able to cross the Gulf of Aden with peace of mind and asking them to continue escorting ships there. Additionally, The Japanese Shipowners' Association and other groups expressed appreciation for protection of Japan-related vessels and asked for continuation of efforts in fighting against piracy.



Video: Record of activities by the 34th DSPE
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjVR7dAID2k>

⁵ Eight JCG officers are aboard the MSDF destroyer and conduct judicial law enforcement activities, including arresting and interrogating pirates, as required.

Fig. III-3-2-2

SDF's Counter Piracy Operations (Image)

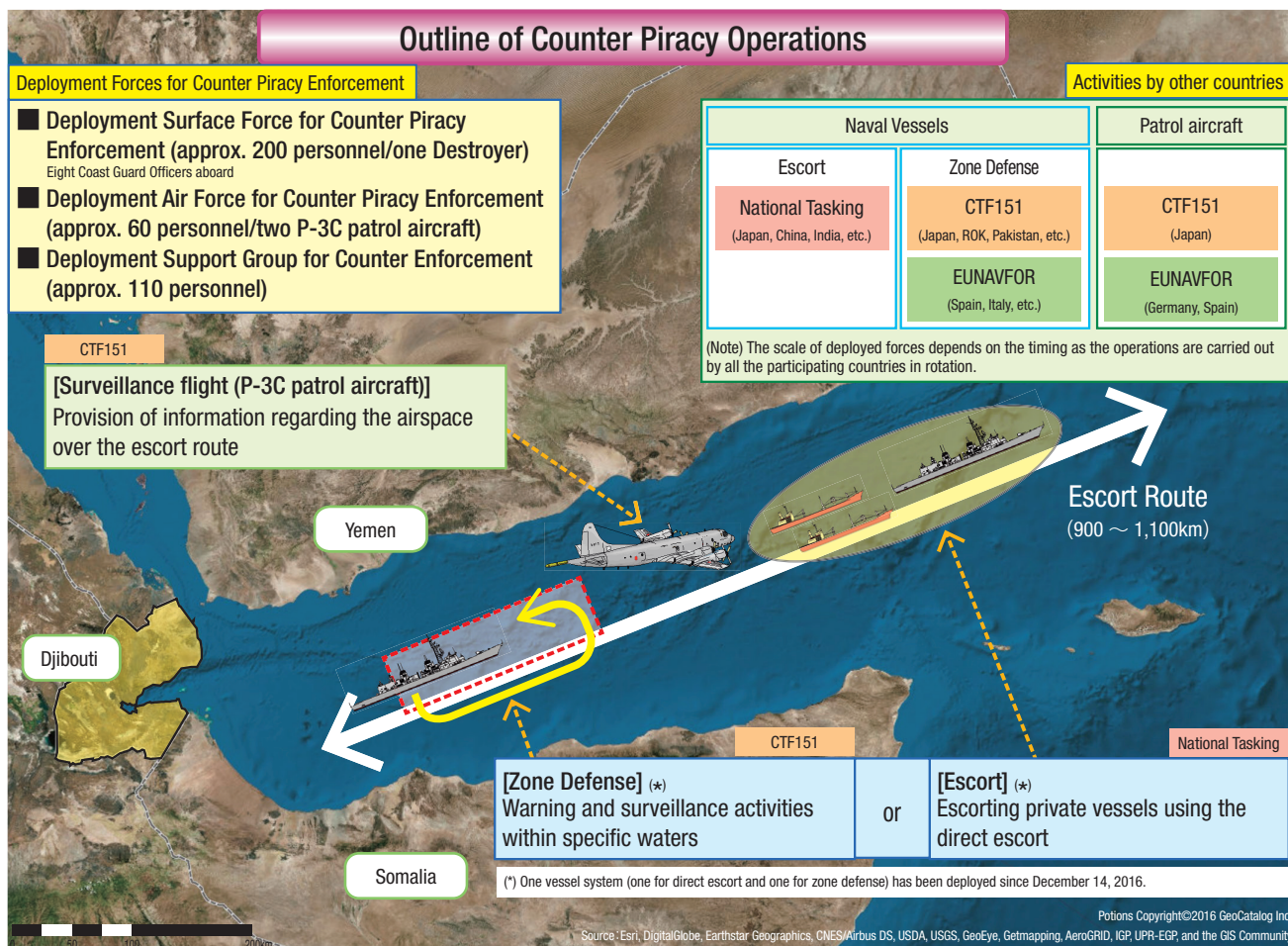


Fig. III-3-2-3

Structure of the Deployed Forces

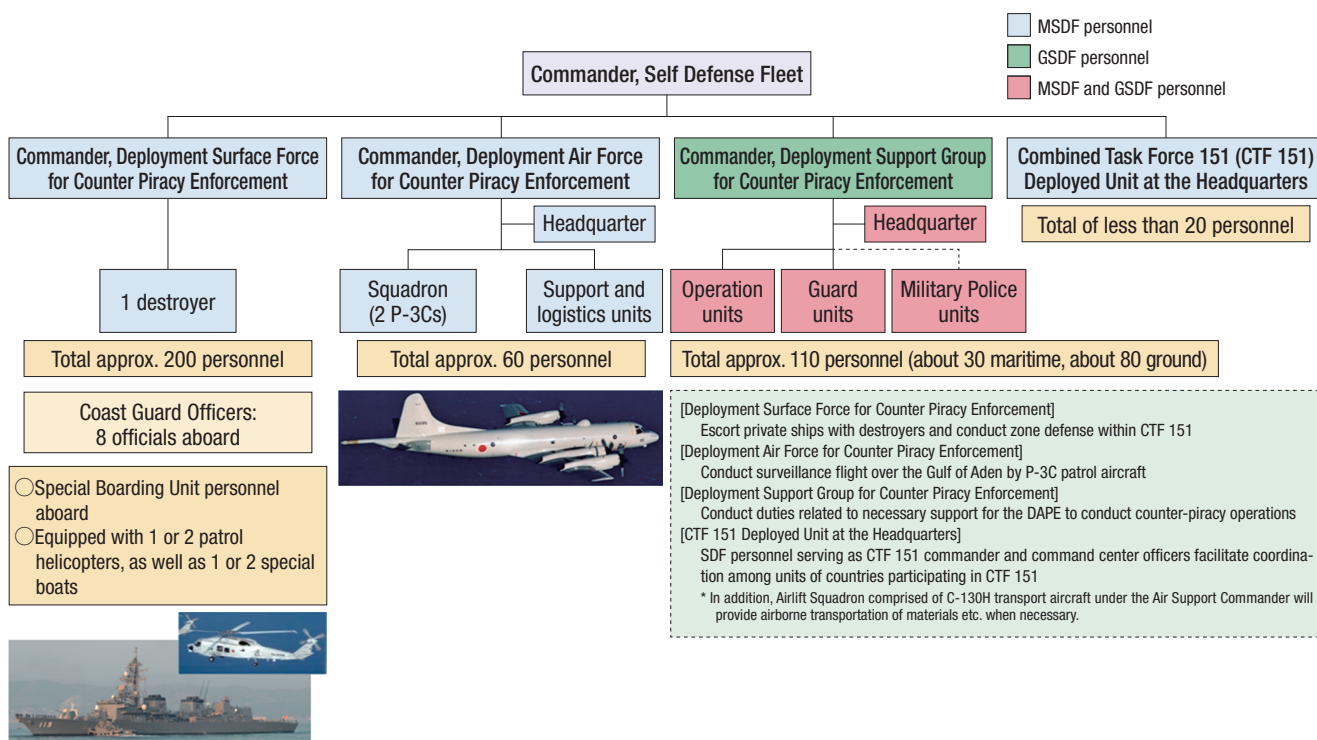


Fig. III-3-2-4

Visit to Ports and Airports by SDF (2019)



3 Training-Centered Initiatives

The MSDF not only endeavors to enhance its tactical skills through joint training with coastal states alongside sea lanes, but also strives to contribute to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, promote mutual understanding, and strengthen relationships of trust. In the Indo-Pacific Deployment which was implemented from April to July 2019, Destroyer JS “Izumo” and other deployed units conducted a total of eleven bilateral/multilateral and friendly drills, including the ADMM-Plus Maritime Security Field Exercise and the Japan-France-Australia-US quadrilateral

exercise La Perouse, while actively making port calls on the way to and back from counter-piracy operations.

Strengthening cooperation with coastal states of the Indo-Pacific region through the bilateral exercise and port calls contributes to the maintenance of maritime security, which has extremely high significance.

Q See

Reference 48 (Participation in Multilateral Exercise [Past Three Years])

Fig. III-3-2-4 (Visit to Ports and Airports by SDF [2019])

4 Cooperation in Maritime Security

The MOD/SDF has implemented capacity building in maritime security for Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka to help them enhance their MDA and other capabilities. Such program contributes to strengthening cooperation with partner countries that share common strategic interests with Japan.

The Basic Plan on Ocean Policy, which was approved by a Cabinet decision in May 2018, calls for strengthening cooperation related to maritime security with various countries through security dialogue and defense interaction among defense authorities at bilateral and multilateral levels with the aim of maintaining and advancing “free and open

seas” supported by a maritime order defined by laws and rules. In response to this, the MOD has been working on cooperation for maritime security within regional security dialogue frameworks such as the ADMM-Plus and the ISM on MS.