

2026 DEFENSE OF JAPAN Pamphlet



On the Publication of “Defense of Japan 2026”

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Defense Minister

小泉進次郎



The time has come for our annual release of our white paper, “Defense of Japan.”

Each year personnel from around the Ministry of Defense (MOD), including civilians and members of the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces, are brought together to form a team and prepare the white paper over the course of approximately one year.

This year’s white paper outlines the security environment surrounding Japan and the initiatives undertaken by the MOD and the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), and attempts to provide clear explanations of key developments and topics regarding the progress made in reinforcing Japan’s defense capabilities.

Upon preparing the white paper, I have asked the white paper team to ensure that the activities of the MOD/JSDF are conveyed not only to experts and specialists in Japan and overseas, but also to the Japanese public at large. The team has brought expertise from across the entire MOD, exercised its creativity, and decided to take on new approaches such as creating videos and booklets to introduce the content of the white paper and make it more engaging to a wider audience.

As for the content of the white paper, the security environment surrounding Japan is as severe and complex as it has ever been since the end of World War II. Even in East Asia, the possibility of serious situations taking place that might shake the foundation of the stable postwar international order cannot be ruled out.

After the formulation of the current “Three Strategic Documents,” including the National Security Strategy, challenges to the free and open international order based on the rule of law have intensified. In the Indo-Pacific, not only are China and North Korea further strengthening their military capabilities, China-Russia and Russia-North Korea are also reinforcing their cooperation. Drawing lessons from Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, countries around the world are quickly preparing for “new ways of warfare,” such as mass employment of unmanned assets, as well as getting ready for prolonged conflicts, bringing accelerated changes to the security environment in a wide range of domains. This year’s white paper extensively covers developments related to these “new ways of warfare” and incorporates analyses by researchers from the National Institute for Defense Studies.

To resolutely defend the lives and peaceful livelihoods of Japanese nationals, Japan’s territorial land, waters, and airspace, as well as to protect every member of the JSDF who carries out these missions and their families, it is imperative that Japan further reinforce and transform its defense capabilities with a stronger sense of urgency and crisis than ever before. Based on this understanding, last fiscal year the Government of Japan brought forward the goal to achieve the defense budget level of 2% of GDP outlined in the current National Security Strategy. In the FY2026 budget, expenditures, inclusive of expenses related to the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) and the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan, exceeded 9 trillion yen for the first time. Furthermore, the “Three Strategic Documents” will be revised ahead of schedule within this year. Also, shortly after assuming office, I have established the Promotion HQ for Transformation of Defense Capabilities within the MOD, where in-depth discussions are being held from a variety of perspectives.

At the same time, peace and stability in the region cannot be achieved by any country alone.

The Japan-U.S. Alliance is a key pillar of our national security policy. During my meeting with Secretary of War Pete

Hegseth this January, we confirmed that Japan and the U.S. have been working closely together under the unwavering Alliance, and exchanged candid views on concrete measures to further enhance Japan-U.S. defense cooperation. I will make continued efforts to elevate the Alliance to new heights.

Since assuming office, I have also built relationships of trust with leaders through various meetings. To realize a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific,” we are advancing bilateral efforts as well as multilateral efforts such as minilateral cooperation¹ of Japan-U.S.-Australia, Japan-U.S.-ROK, and Japan-U.S.-Australia-Philippines, and cooperation through the Japan-ASEAN, NATO-IP4,² and PIPIR³ frameworks, along with the hosting of JPIDD⁴ and other international conferences.

As the security environment becomes increasingly and rapidly severe, what is required now is to strengthen resilience against crises all across the entire Indo-Pacific region. In order to do so, Japan will build and expand multilayered networks among allies and like-minded countries, and enhance interconnectivity with like-minded countries and others in every area, such as training, operations, defense equipment, and industrial bases. As a result, we will aim to improve the deterrence capabilities of the region as a whole.

Furthermore, defense production and technological bases are a virtually integral part of defense capability itself, and their reinforcement is indispensable. This year’s white paper has enriched its content on defense production and technological bases, and elevated it from a single “Chapter” to a “Part.” A wide range of perspectives from companies supporting the defense industry, startups, and researchers in the fields of science and technology are presented as column articles.

The MOD will continue to coordinate closely with industries and work together with relevant ministries and agencies to build a robust and sustainable defense industry. In doing so, cooperation with startup companies is also critical. In April of this year, the MOD hosted the Defense Innovation Meeting, an event aimed at further promoting the utilization of startups in the defense sector, in which numerous startup companies and venture capital firms participated.

Also the transfer of defense equipment is highly significant. In addition to strengthening the deterrence and response capabilities of Japan’s ally and like-minded countries, it allows countries to possess the same equipment and share production and maintenance and sustainment infrastructure, thereby enabling the provision of mutual support. At the same time, it helps ensure the domestic production capacity necessary for sustained operational capability. In light of these considerations, the Government of Japan revised the “Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology” and their “Implementation Guidelines,” including the abolition of the so-called “Five Categories.”

In recent years, the distinction between technologies for civilian use and technologies for security purposes has become blurred, and the domain of dual-use technologies for both defense and civilian use is expanding. Reinforcing the defense production and technological bases and investing in research and development are becoming ever more important to sustaining Japan’s defense capabilities. Also, as a result such efforts in turn can generate benefits, including economic ripple effects and the creation of new dual-use technologies.

Needless to say, the source of defense capabilities that support these efforts is the “personnel.” Not only the JSDF personnel but also their families are essential members of national defense.

This year’s white paper has a new chapter entitled “The Professionalism of JSDF Personnel.” The chapter highlights how each member of the JSDF, comprised of not only uniformed personnel but also administrative officials, technical officials, instructors, and others, fulfill important responsibilities in their respective fields, tasked with the enduring mission of protecting Japan’s peace and independence. The chapter also features the perspectives of family members and children who support these personnel.

In addition, the MOD is advancing initiatives such as the unique revision of the JSDF personnel compensation structure for the first time since the establishment of the JSDF. Even with the changes of the times and society, we are committed to creating an environment where all personnel, regardless of their specialty, age, gender, and place of assignment, can devote themselves to their missions with pride and honor. Since assuming office, I have visited many units of the JSDF, and will continue to listen to the voices from the field and actively work on sharing information to the public, strengthening recruitment activities, and creating a rewarding and meaningful job environment.

The efforts of the MOD/JSDF to transform Japan’s defense capabilities can be realized only with the understanding and support of each and every Japanese citizen and the international community. I hope this white paper will help as many readers as possible to better comprehend the security environment surrounding Japan and the efforts made by the MOD/JSDF.

¹ A form of collaboration among three or more but no more than a small number of countries

² The Indo-Pacific Four: NATO’s Indo-Pacific partners (Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea)

³ Partnership for Indo-Pacific Industrial Resilience

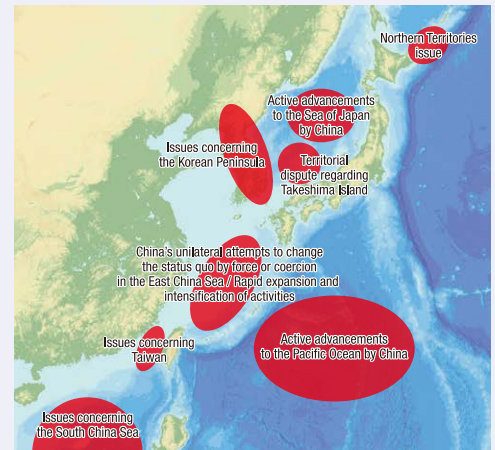
⁴ Japan Pacific Islands Defense Dialogue

Security Environment Surrounding Japan

Chapter 1 Overview

International Community amid the Greatest Trial of the Postwar Era

- States that do not share universal values or political and economic systems based on such values are expanding their influence. Unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts represent a serious challenge to the existing international order. The international community is facing its greatest trial since World War II and entering a new era of crisis. The global balance of power is shifting dramatically and competition among states is growing. In particular, the inter-state competition between the U.S. and China is likely to intensify even further in the future.
- Rapid developments in science and technology are fundamentally changing the paradigm of security. Countries are striving to develop innovative technologies that can become so-called game changers. The traditional military structure is undergoing fundamental changes, as are warfare tactics and strategies.
- Risks in cyberspace and other domains are becoming more serious, and other security-related global issues such as information warfare and climate change are emerging.
- Gray zone situations involving territorial disputes are constantly occurring. The use of hybrid warfare, which combines military and non-military means, may become even more sophisticated.



Security environment surrounding Japan

Increasingly Severe Security Situation in the Indo-Pacific Region

- Such global security environment and challenges are particularly prominent in the Indo-Pacific region, where Japan is located, and are likely to intensify still further in the future.
- It cannot be ruled out that a serious situation similar to Russia's aggression against Ukraine may occur in the Indo-Pacific region in the future, particularly in East Asia.

Chapter 2 Russia's Aggression and Ukraine's Defense

- Russia's aggression against Ukraine undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. It is a serious violation of international law prohibiting the use of force and of the United Nations (UN) Charter. Such unilateral changes to the status quo by force have shaken the very foundation of the international order, including in Asia.
- This situation, in which a permanent member of the Security Council, which is supposed to take primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, openly engages in military actions challenging international law and the international order, claims innocent lives and repeatedly uses language and actions that can be interpreted as threats involving nuclear weapons, is unprecedented. If such aggression is tolerated, it could send out the wrong message and implication that unilateral changes to the status quo by force are also acceptable elsewhere. Accordingly, the international community, including Japan, should not tolerate Russia's action.
- In addition to Ukraine's strong resistance, the international community has united to implement strong sanctions and other measures. As an ally of the U.S.—a NATO member—and a country located on the opposite side of Europe across the Eurasian continent, Japan must closely monitor future changes in the European situation, including their strategic impact, acknowledging that the security of Europe and the Indo-Pacific is inseparable.



Damage in Kharkiv, Ukraine (February 2025)
[NurPhoto = AFP]

Chapter 3 Defense Policies of Other Countries and Regions

The U.S. - Security Policy and Activities of the Second Trump Administration

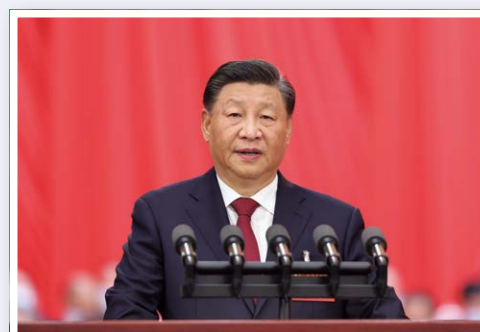
- The second Trump administration was formed in January 2025. The National Security Strategy was released in December of the same year, followed by the National Defense Strategy in January 2026. These documents clarified the security strategy envisioned by the second Trump administration.
- Under the banner of “America First,” the Department of War indicated its intention to restore “peace through strength” and to focus on the Indo-Pacific region, where Japan is located, while prioritizing homeland defense. The documents also provide detailed descriptions of relations with allies, among other matters.



Secretary of War Hegseth delivers the oath of enlistment
[U.S. Department of War]

China - Intensified Unilateral Attempts and Activities to Change the Status Quo by Force or Coercion

- China's external posture, military activities, and other activities are a matter of serious concern for Japan and the international community and present an unprecedented and the greatest strategic challenge which Japan should respond with its comprehensive national power and in cooperation and collaboration with its ally, like-minded countries, and others.
- For more than 30 years, China has sustained high-level growth of its defense budget without transparency, engaging in broad and rapid improvement of its military power in qualitative and quantitative terms with a focus on nuclear, missile, naval, and air forces.
- China has been intensifying its activities in the region surrounding Japan, including the East China Sea, particularly in the area around the Senkaku Islands, the Sea of Japan, and the western Pacific Ocean, extending beyond the so-called first island chain to the second island chain.
- In 2025, a series of incidents occurred, including: the activity of an aircraft carrier in the waters east of Iwo-To and the activity of two aircraft carriers in the Pacific Ocean in June; the unusual close approach by a Chinese fighter aircraft to a Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) aircraft in June; the unusual close approach by a Chinese fighter-bomber to a JSDF aircraft in July; the activity of an aircraft carrier in the Pacific Ocean from the east of the main island of Okinawa to the east of Amami Oshima Island in December; and intermittent radar illumination against a JSDF aircraft by a Chinese fighter for approximately 30 minutes in December.
- Such unusual close approaches by Chinese military aircraft could have triggered an accidental collision. Furthermore, the radar illumination by the Chinese military aircraft was a dangerous act exceeding the range necessary for the safe flight of an aircraft, and it is extremely regrettable that such incidents took place.
- China has intensified its military activities around Taiwan. China conducted military exercises in the sea and airspace several times. It is believed that through the series of activities, China seeks to create a fait accompli where the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is operating, and improve its actual combat capabilities.
- China has intensified its activities in the South China Sea, while promoting militarization, based on assertions of unlawful maritime claims. Such actions to further promote its attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion are serious concerns to Japan. Issues surrounding the South China Sea are directly connected to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and represent a legitimate concern, not only for Japan, which has major sea lanes in the South China Sea, but also for the entire international community.
- China is further strengthening its cooperation with Russia, including in military activities. In the Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War in September 2025, President Xi Jinping, President Vladimir Putin, and Chairman of the State Affairs Commission Kim Jong Un were seen standing side by side. In the vicinity of Japan, China and Russia conducted joint flights of bombers and joint navigations of vessels. Such repeated joint activities are obviously intended as demonstration activities against Japan and pose a grave concern for Japan's security.



Xi Jinping, currently in his third term as general secretary
[EPA/Jiji]

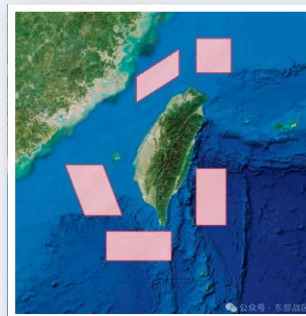


President Xi, President Putin, and Chairman of the State Affairs Commission Kim standing side by side at a military parade in September 2025 [EPA/Jiji]

Security Environment Surrounding Japan

U.S.-China Strategic Competition; Growing Tensions over Taiwan

- The political, economic, and military competition between the U.S. and China has become even more evident in recent years due to various concerns such as changes in the balance of power caused by China's growth and various pending issues.
- The overall military balance between China and Taiwan is rapidly tilting in China's favor.
- Regarding Taiwan, China firmly maintains the principle that Taiwan is a part of China and that the Taiwan issue is its internal affair. China has repeatedly stated that it has not renounced the use of force. China has further intensified its military activities around Taiwan.
- China's pursuit of unification through military activities in the grayzone is a growing concern. In addition, there is a possibility that China could impose a blockade of Taiwan in the grayzone by forward-deploying China Coast Guard vessels.



Exercise area in the vicinity of Taiwan announced by the PLA (December 2025) [Jiji]

North Korea - Advancements in Nuclear and Missile Development

- North Korea's military activities pose an even more grave and imminent threat to Japan's national security than ever before. They seriously undermine the peace and security of the region and the international community. They also represent a serious challenge to the entire international community with regard to non-proliferation of weapons including weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).
- North Korea has conducted six nuclear tests in the past and is believed to possess the technological capability to mount a nuclear warhead on its ballistic missiles with their range covering the Japanese Archipelago and to strike Japan.
- In recent years, North Korea has continuously pursued missile development at an extremely rapid pace, launching ballistic missiles that fly with irregular trajectories as well as so-called "hypersonic missiles." North Korea is also pursuing operationalization of long-range cruise missiles designed to carry a nuclear warhead.
- As Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues, North Korea is rapidly developing its cooperative relationship with Russia. There is a risk that North Korea's military forces could be built up in the medium to long term through military cooperation with Russia, which is seriously concerning from the perspective of the security of the region surrounding Japan.
- At the 9th Congress of the Korean Workers Party in February 2026, an intention to continuously strengthen nuclear capabilities was clearly reiterated as a military objective for the next five years. In addition, development goals were articulated for various weapons other than nuclear weapons and missiles, for example, unmanned assets and electronic warfare systems. It appears that North Korea will continue its nuclear and missile development, as well as aim to develop diverse equipment systems while taking into account the trends in military science and technology in other countries.



"Hwasongpho-20" which appeared in the military parade on October 10, 2025 [Korea News Service/Jiji]

Russia - Strategic Cooperation with China under the Banner of a "Strong State"

- The Russian military is continuing active military activities in the vicinity of Japan, showing its tendency to deploy the latest military equipment in the Far East. Russia's military activities in the Indo-Pacific region, including Japan, coupled with its strategic partnership with China, are posing a strong security concern.
- Russia has been developing and deploying various new weapons under its "strong state" model. Since the start of its aggression against Ukraine, it has also been moving to increase troop numbers and expand and reorganize its military units.
- Russia is continuing active military activities in the Northern Territories, which are inherent territories of Japan, under illegal occupation. As well as the ongoing construction of facilities for its troops in the region, Russia has deployed new military equipment such as coastal (surface-to-ship) missiles belonging to its Navy and fighter jets belonging to its aerospace forces. It also conducts large-scale exercises in the surrounding seas and airspace.



MiG-31 fighter aircraft equipped with "Kinzhal" [EPA/Jiji]

The Middle East - Continued Instability

- An exchange of attacks between Israel/the U.S. and Iran occurred in June 2025 and has occurred again since February 2026. Iran declared the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, while the U.S. announced a blockade of maritime traffic entering and exiting Iranian ports. The U.S. and Iran agreed in April 2026 to suspend attacks for two weeks. Negotiations aimed at ending the hostilities were continued through intermediaries including Pakistan, and by June of the same year, both sides announced that they had agreed to a memorandum concerning the cessation of hostilities.
- With regard to the situation in Gaza, an agreement was reached between the parties based on President Donald J. Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. The situation has made progress, including the realization of a ceasefire and release of hostages.

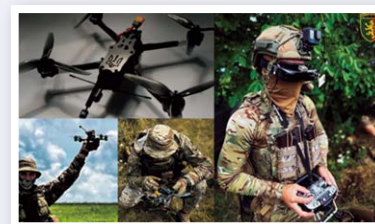


An Iranian missile landing on the coast of Haifa in northern Israel (February 2026) [EPA/Jiji]

Chapter 4 Trends in New Ways of Warfare

New Ways of Warfare and Related Challenges

- A mass quantity of diverse, inexpensive unmanned assets has been deployed on the battlefields of Ukraine, where they have been used to launch attacks on expensive equipment and basic infrastructure as well as large-scale coordinated attacks in combination with conventional shells and missiles.
- Decision-making using AI and networks has accelerated, and, in addition to attacks in the space, cyber, and electromagnetic domains, information warfare is also being combined with other kinds of attacks in sophisticated ways. Furthermore, compared to the past, equipment and tactics are often updated on an extremely short cycle.
- It is believed that both Russia and Ukraine view the stable procurement of equipment and ammunition as a challenge. The situation has made clear the importance of maintaining regular stockpiles and ensuring sufficient sustained operational capability. At the same time, receiving effective support from allies, like-minded countries, and others has become a key factor.



First-person view UAV (FPV drone) and operation [Ukrainian military]

Trends in Various Domains and Advanced Technologies Supporting New Ways of Warfare

- The space, cyber, and electromagnetic domains, as well as advanced technologies, have become critical enablers of new ways of warfare.
- In the space domain, where satellites are used to strengthen command and control, communications, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, space assets are under increasing threats from anti-satellite weapons and other capabilities. In the cyber domain, cyberattacks, including compromise of critical infrastructure, pose a security threat. In the electromagnetic domain, electronic warfare, including electronic attacks, and electromagnetic spectrum management have become increasingly important in modern operations.
- Advanced technologies that support these domains, such as AI and quantum technologies, are fields in which technological development is making rapid advances. In information warfare, deepfakes and generative AI-created videos and images have also become a more serious threat.

Trends Concerning Defense Production and Technological Bases

- The U.S. actively invests in advanced technologies through organizations such as the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU).
- China published a white paper titled "China's National Security in the New Era," which positions the development of emerging fields (including networks, data, and AI) as new fields relevant to national security, while indicating that the development of advanced technologies will have a serious impact on the security environment.
- NATO established the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) with the aim of incorporating advanced new technologies into security. In the 2026 Challenge Programme, DIANA selected 150 companies to develop dual-use technologies in response to defense and security-related challenges (including energy, space operations, and unmanned systems).
- Various nations are proactively promoting the application of AI, quantum, semiconductor, and other advanced technologies to national security as well as related management. Moreover, countries understand the defense production and technological bases in their own country are necessary elements of national defense, and are advancing initiatives such as support for the participation of their domestic companies and the encouragement of exports. In particular, each country exports equipment strategically because it contributes to strengthening not only the defense production and technological bases but also the relationship with the partner countries receiving the exports.

Chapter 1 Basic Concepts of Japan's Security and Defense

Measures to Ensure Security

- What should be prioritized the most in protecting the lives and livelihoods of the people of Japan is carrying out active diplomacy. With the Japan-U.S. Alliance as the cornerstone, it is essential to work along with like-minded countries and promote multilateral cooperation.
- At the same time, diplomacy needs to be backed by defense capabilities. By taking a strategic approach, Japan will not only carry out diplomacy toward the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) but will also promote the fundamental reinforcement of its defense capabilities, including the possession of counterstrike capabilities.
- Under the Constitution, Japan, in line with the basic policies of maintaining the Exclusively Defense-Oriented Policy and not becoming a military power that poses a threat to other countries, ensures civilian control, and observes the Three Non-Nuclear Principles as a set of policy guidelines.



Defense Minister Koizumi receiving the special guard of honor at his inauguration

Revision of the Three Strategic Documents

- Changes in the security environment are accelerating across a wide range of fields, since 2022, when the current National Security Strategy (NSS), National Defense Strategy (NDS), and Defense Buildup Program (DBP)—the Three Strategic Documents—were formulated.
- First, challenges to the free and open international order based on the rule of law are intensifying. Second, in the Indo-Pacific, not only are China and North Korea further strengthening their military capabilities, China-Russia and Russia-North Korea are also reinforcing their cooperation. Third, based on lessons learned from Russia's aggression against Ukraine, countries are in haste to prepare to defend against new ways of warfare that include the mass operation of unmanned assets, and prolonged conflicts.
- With accelerating changes in the security environment across various fields, to begin with, the Government has achieved the "2% of GDP level" stipulated in the current NSS, as the total of the initial and supplementary budgets, ahead of the original schedule. It is also conducting internal deliberations toward revising the Three Documents within 2026.
- Specifically, in October 2025, the Promotion HQ for Transformation of Defense Capabilities was established under the Defense Minister for the purpose of managing and accelerating the progress of initiatives based on the current Three Documents, as well as discussing new versions of the Three Documents. Discussions toward their revision are currently underway.



The Promotion HQ for Transformation of Defense Capabilities

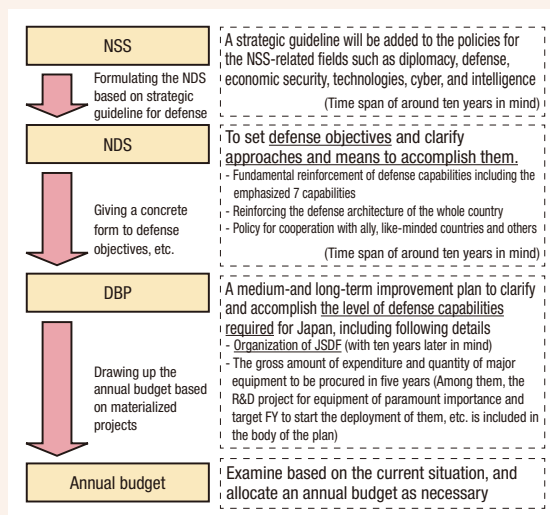
Chapter 2 The Three Documents, including the National Security Strategy of Japan, and Defense-Related Expenditures

National Security Strategy (NSS)

- The NSS is Japan's supreme national security policy document. It provides strategic guidance for policies in wide-ranging areas, including not only diplomacy and defense, but also economic security, technology, cyber, and intelligence.

National Defense Strategy (NDS)

- The NDS comprehensively presents Japan's defense objectives and approaches and the means by which Japan accomplishes those objectives.
- The most consequential responsibility of the Government of Japan is to resolutely defend to the end the lives of Japanese nationals and their peaceful livelihood, as well as Japan's territorial land, waters, and airspace. This constitutes the foundation of Japan's national security. The international community, including Japan, is facing serious challenges and has entered into a new era of crisis. Japan needs to squarely face this grim reality and fundamentally reinforce its defense capabilities, with a focus on opponent capabilities.
- In fundamentally reinforcing its defense capabilities, Japan focuses on seven functions and capabilities: (i) stand-off defense capabilities, (ii) integrated air and missile defense capabilities, (iii) unmanned defense capabilities, (iv) cross-domain operation capabilities, (v) command-and-control and intelligence-related functions, (vi) mobile deployment capabilities / civil protection and (vii) sustainability and resiliency.
- A key to deterring invasion against Japan is counterstrike capabilities that leverage stand-off defense capability and other capabilities.



Relationship among the NSS, the NDS, the DBP, and the Annual budget

Defense Buildup Program (DBP)

- The DBP indicates the level of defense capability Japan should possess to fundamentally reinforce its defense capabilities under the NDS. It also sets out total expenditure and the quantity of major equipment to be procured to achieve this end.
- By FY2027, Japan will strengthen its defense capability to the point where Japan is able to take primary responsibility for dealing with invasions against its nation, and disrupt and defeat such threats with the support of its ally and others. Further efforts will be made approximately 10 years after formulating the DBP to better ensure that these defense objectives have been met and reinforce Japan's defense capabilities so that any invasion of Japan can be disrupted and defeated at a more early stage and at places further afield.

Chapter 3 Organizations Responsible for Japan's Security and Defense

- The Ministry of Defense (MOD)/JSDF develops and executes policies based on the basic policies discussed at the National Security Council, which is established in the Cabinet.
- To realize seamless cross-domain operations at all phases from peacetime to contingencies, the MOD/JSDF has adopted the joint operations system in which the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF), the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF), and the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) are all operated integrally under the JSDF Joint Operations Command (JJOC) headed by the JJOC Commander.
- In order to establish a structure capable of fully preparing for all contingencies while also effectively addressing the growing range of policy challenges, the one-person system of State Defense Minister is strengthened to a two-person system in FY2026.

Chapter 4 Framework for the JSDF Activities

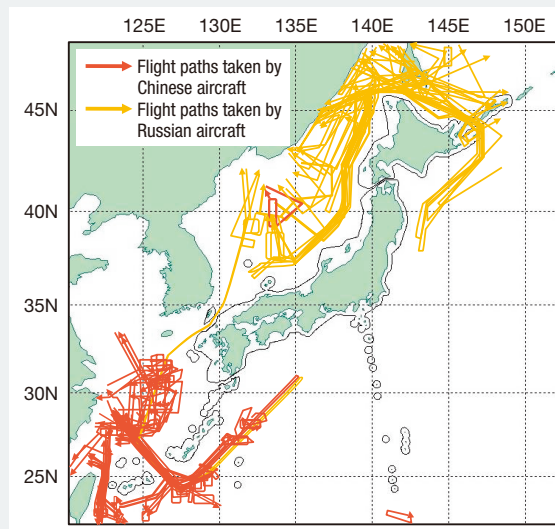
- From October 2026, in response to a cyberattack carried out against certain critical computing devices and software, the JSDF will become able to, in case of special need, implement remote access and neutralization measures (critical computing systems protection measures) against the computing devices and software being used in the cyberattack in order to prevent damage.

Three Approaches to Achieve the Defense Objectives

Chapter 1 Japan's Own Architecture for National Defense

Responses to Invasion of Japan

- Surrounded by water and possessing an extensive coastline, Japan has numerous remote islands distant from the main islands, a vast exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and a broad continental shelf. It is a challenge to ensure the protection of lives, bodies, and property of its people, as well as its territorial land, waters, and airspace, together with abundant resources widely distributed in these areas. In addition, given its heavy reliance on overseas trade for resources and food, it is essential for Japan to reinforce the free and open maritime order and ensure the freedom and safety of navigation and flight.
- The MOD/JSDF will organically integrate operational capabilities across land, maritime, and air domains, as well as the space, cyberspace, and electromagnetic domain under the unified command of the JJOC. By coordinating the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF forces to conduct joint operations, they will deter and defeat any invasion of Japan.
- Moreover, in addition to responding to invasions and unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts, the MOD/JSDF also conducts continuous information gathering and surveillance in peacetime to maintain a posture capable of responding swiftly and appropriately to any violations of airspace and incursions into territorial waters.
- The total number of scrambles conducted by ASDF fighters in FY2025 was 595, including 366 times for Chinese aircraft and 214 times for Russian aircraft. In December, incidents were confirmed, including radar illumination by Chinese fighter aircraft against ASDF fighter aircraft, as well as a joint flight by Chinese and Russian bombers. Defense Minister Koizumi briefed the international community on these incidents and expressed grave concerns.
- Furthermore, in order to address information warfare, including the cognitive domain, which affects people's perceptions and influences public opinion and government decision-making through the spread of disinformation and other information aimed at eroding trust in government and dividing society, the Defense Intelligence Headquarters, which plays a central role in this regard, takes the necessary measures.
- In addition, the MOD/JSDF continues necessary measures, including responding to North Korea's "illicit ship-to-ship transfers" in violation of the UN Security Council resolutions. The MOD/JSDF also continues its efforts on counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, and ensuring the safety of Japan-related vessels in the Middle East, in order to ensure the stable use of critical sea lines of communication.



Example flight patterns of Russian and Chinese aircraft to which scrambles responded (FY2025)

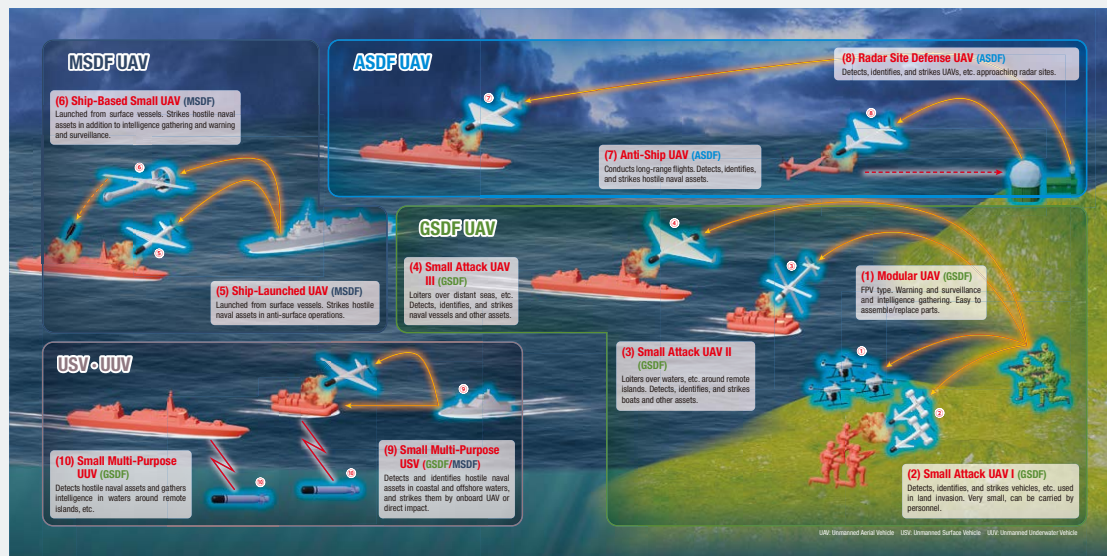
Fundamental Reinforcement of Japan's Defense Capabilities

- In order to enhance deterrence and response capabilities by focusing on adversaries' capabilities, Japan is fundamentally reinforcing its defense capabilities, with an emphasis on seven fields: stand-off defense capabilities, integrated air and missile defense capabilities, unmanned defense capabilities, cross-domain operation capabilities, command-and-control and intelligence-related functions, mobile deployment capabilities/civil protection, and sustainability and resiliency.
- As part of efforts to strengthen stand-off defense capabilities, Japan is steadily advancing deployment of the Type-25 Surface-to-Ship Guided Missile, the Type-25 Hyper Velocity Gliding Projectile, and hypersonic missiles, and collecting target information.
- As part of efforts to strengthen integrated air and missile defense capabilities, Japan is enhancing interceptor assets as well as sensors and networks. The former includes steadily improving the GSDF's Upgraded Type-03 Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (improved), acquiring the Standard Missile (SM)-3 Block IIA jointly developed by Japan and the U.S. for Aegis destroyers, and building Aegis System Equipped Vessels (ASEV).



ASEV (conceptual image)

- As part of efforts to enhance cross-domain operation capabilities, Japan is strengthening the space-based intelligence capabilities, as well as Space Domain Awareness (SDA). In recognition that the space domain is no longer merely a domain for surveillance activities but also a domain for operations, the Japan Air Self-Defense Force will be reorganized into the “Japan Aerospace Self-Defense Force.”
- In addition, Japan is also enhancing the cyber defense structure, promoting cybersecurity measures in the defense industry, acquiring fighter aircraft (F-35A/B), and conducting research on laser systems to respond against missiles, such as small UAVs and cruise missiles.
- Furthermore, the GSDF 15th Brigade will be reorganized into the 15th Division to reinforce the defense architecture in the southwestern region of Japan.
- As a part of strengthening unmanned defense capabilities, Japan will acquire a large number of low-cost UAVs, USVs, and UUVs with an aim to establish the Synchronized, Hybrid, Integrated and Enhanced Littoral Defense (SHIELD) with unmanned assets within FY2027.



SHIELD (conceptual image)

Reinforcing the Defense Architecture of the Whole Country

- In addition to fundamentally reinforcing defense capabilities, the Government of Japan builds an overall architecture for national defense by integrating its national power, which includes diplomatic, intelligence, economic, and technological capabilities and systematically combining all policy measures.
- To this end, the Government is working to advance reinforcement of comprehensive architecture for national defense by promoting initiatives in four fields: research and development, public infrastructure development, cybersecurity, and international cooperation to enhance the deterrence capabilities, etc. of Japan and like-minded countries.
- In addition, continuous peacetime surveillance, initiatives related to the space domain, and responses to large-scale disasters and the rescue and transportation of Japanese nationals overseas (R/TJNO) are also efforts that require the full power of the nation. Thus, the MOD/JSDF will carry out various activities in close cooperation with relevant ministries, agencies, and others.
- With regard to cybersecurity, in response to the enactment of the Cyber Response Capability Strengthening Act and Necessary Arrangement of relevant Acts in May 2025, the MOD/JSDF will actively contribute to the Government's efforts in cooperation with relevant ministries and agencies.
- In FY2025, the MOD/JSDF also conducted disaster relief operations in response to typhoons, earthquakes, and other natural disasters, in coordination with relevant ministries and agencies.

Training and Exercises to Reinforce Japan's Own Architecture for National Defense

- The MOD/JSDF actively conducts various high-level bilateral/multilateral training and exercises, and various exercises involving other ministries, agencies, and local governments to further improve deterrence and response capabilities.
- In June 2025, an unmanned vehicle-based real underwater mine disposal test was conducted for the first time off Iwo-To.



An underwater mine being disposed of by an unmanned vehicle

Three Approaches to Achieve the Defense Objectives

Chapter 2 Japan-U.S. Alliance

Outline of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements

- Japan will maintain its peace, security, and independence centered on the Security Arrangements with the world's dominant military power, the U.S., with which it shares basic values such as democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and a capitalist economy, as well as interests in maintaining the peace and security of the world; and has strong economic ties.

Strengthening the Joint Deterrence and Response Capabilities of Japan and the U.S.

- Japan's NDS and the U.S. National Defense Strategy are consistent in prioritizing the prevention of unilateral changes to the status quo by force through integrating all approaches and means.
- Japan will further deepen discussions with the U.S. on their respective roles, missions, and capabilities to further reinforce Japan-U.S. joint deterrence capabilities.

Enhancement of Alliance Coordination Function

- Japan and the U.S. established the Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM) to ensure seamless and effective coordination in Japan-U.S. response. Since then, Japan and the U.S. have been utilizing the ACM to coordinate closely, including in response to the Kumamoto Earthquake and the Noto Peninsula Earthquake, the ballistic missile launches by North Korea, and Chinese activities in the waters and airspace around the Senkaku Islands.
- Japan's NDS calls for Japan to further upgrade the overall coordination functions between Japan and the U.S. centered on the ACM and to promote closer operational coordination by leveraging the ACM and others to enhance collaboration with like-minded countries and others centered around the Japan-U.S. Alliance.

Measures Concerning the Stationing of the U.S. Forces Japan

- It is necessary to maintain the presence of the U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) and its readiness to make rapid and agile responses in case of emergency in Japan and its surrounding areas, so that the Japan-U.S. Alliance can sufficiently function as deterrence contributing to the defense of Japan and regional peace and stability.
- Japan will steadily advance efforts toward the realignment of the USFJ to further reinforce the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, while also mitigating the impact on local communities such as Okinawa.

Japan-U.S. Bilateral Training and Exercises

- The Japan-U.S. Alliance is essential to Japan's national security, and Japan-U.S. bilateral exercises play a significant role in enhancing Japan's deterrence and response capabilities.
- The JSDF has been consistently conducting bilateral training involving each service as well as Japan-U.S. bilateral joint exercises (field training exercises and command post exercises) to improve the JSDF's tactical skills and strengthen collaboration with the U.S. Forces, demonstrating the unified commitment and capacity of Japan and the U.S. for achieving peace and stability in the region.



Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting (March 2026)
[Prime Minister's Office website]



Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting (May 2026)



"North Wind 26" field training exercise with the U.S. Army (January 2026)

Chapter 3 Cooperation with Like-Minded Countries and Others

Strategic Promotion of Multilateral and Multilayered Defense Cooperation

- To create a security environment that does not tolerate unilateral changes to the status quo by force, it is extremely important to strengthen cooperation, not only with the ally but also with as many countries as possible. The MOD/JSDF will promote multilateral and multilayered defense cooperation and exchanges to realize FOIP.
- The MOD/JSDF advances high-level exchanges, bilateral/multilateral exercises, capacity building, and defense equipment and technology cooperation with countries in various regions, including the Indo-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. It is important to promote bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation and exchanges in a multifaceted and multilayered manner that appropriately combines various means, including the development of institutional frameworks such as the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) and Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), which will lead to creating an ideal security environment.

Training and Exercises with Like-Minded Countries

- As efforts toward realizing FOIP, Japan will actively promote bilateral/multilateral exercises with its ally and like-minded countries throughout the Indo-Pacific region.
- In particular, Japan will work to create a security environment that does not tolerate unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts, by maintaining and improving the capabilities and skills of each country through common efforts such as bilateral/multilateral exercises with Japan's ally and like-minded countries, and by strengthening deterrence and response capabilities through collaboration and cooperation, thereby creating a synergistic effect.

Efforts toward International Peace Cooperation Activities

- The MOD/JSDF continues to dispatch personnel to the Headquarters of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) tasked with monitoring the ceasefire between Egypt and Israel and to the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS).
- The MOD/JSDF actively contributes to UN initiatives for international peace by dispatching JSDF personnel to the UN Secretariat and PKO training centers and providing support to the UN Triangular Partnership Programme (UNTPP).
- The JSDF maintains a posture to respond to urgent requests from affected countries for international disaster relief activities.

Comprehensive Cooperation with the International Community

- The MOD/JSDF will actively participate in the development of international frameworks and training related to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.
- From the perspectives of preventing the proliferation of WMDs and improving the response capability of the JSDF, the MOD/JSDF undertakes efforts to strengthen non-proliferation frameworks including the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), such as by holding various relevant training exercises and meetings and participating in similar activities held by other countries.
- With regard to Women, Peace and Security (WPS), as a responsible member of the international community, the MOD will also promote WPS and contribute to peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region, and, by extension, to the international community as a whole, while cooperating with defense authorities of other countries pursuing respect for fundamental human rights and ensuring the rule of law.
- For Japan as a maritime nation, strengthening a free and open maritime order and ensuring the freedom and safety of navigation and flight are essential. The MOD/JSDF will promote initiatives related to maritime security, including maritime surveillance and counter-piracy operations.



The 12th ADMM-Plus (November 2025)



Joint training conducted in connection with the deployment of the U.K. Carrier Strike Group (CSG) (October 2025)



The second Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Project (July 2025)

Three Approaches to Achieve the Defense Objectives

Chapter 4 Initiatives on Coexistence with Local Communities and the Environment

Measures Concerning Harmony with Local Communities

- Implementing various activities of the MOD/JSDF will not be feasible without the understanding and cooperation of the Japanese people and local governments. Therefore it is necessary to further deepen mutual trust between local communities, Japanese people, and the JSDF.
- For seamless stationing of the U.S. Forces Japan, which is an extremely important element in securing the safety of Japan, it is essential to gain the understanding and cooperation of the local communities.
- During Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, the MOD/JSDF conducted necessary cooperation, such as performing demonstration flights by Blue Impulse over the Yumeshima venue as well as other locations throughout Osaka Prefecture in July.



Blue Impulse flying over the Expo venue

Responding to Climate Change and Environmental Issues

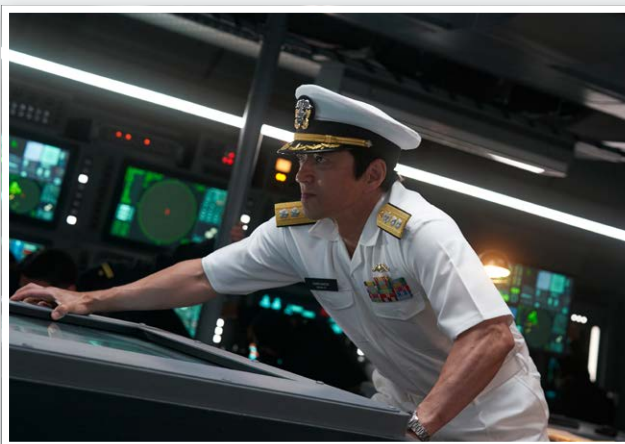
- The MOD/JSDF will address and contribute to resolving climate change and environmental issues. In addition, the MOD/JSDF will promote initiatives that focus more on the coexistence of the JSDF/USFJ facilities/areas with the surrounding areas.
- In July 2025, based on the Plan for Global Warming Countermeasures, the MOD formulated a reduction plan for greenhouse gas emissions in its operations. It established new targets to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions directly and indirectly generated through the MOD's operations by 50% in FY2030, 65% in FY2035, and 79% in FY2040 respectively from its FY2013 levels.

Public Relations Activities, Public Document Management, Information Disclosure, etc.

- The MOD/JSDF is actively conducting public relations activities so that the public can understand its activities and initiatives in various ways, including through the official websites, social media, video streaming, cooperation in editing the PR magazine "MAMOR," coverage support for media outlets, and various events and PR facilities.
- Each year, the MOD/JSDF conducted a troop review, fleet review, and air review by assembling large numbers of units and equipment from across Japan at a single location. However, as Japan is facing the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II, it has been decided that troop reviews, fleet reviews, and air reviews will not be conducted, unless there is a major change in the security environment surrounding Japan.
- Efforts are also being made to promote the digital management of public documents and to appropriately handle public document management and responses to information disclosure requests.



PR magazine "MAMOR"



Filming support (Prime Video original film, *The Silent Service*)
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Reinforcement of the Defense Production and Technological Bases

Chapter 1 Situation Concerning Defense Production and Technological Bases

Defense Production and Technological Bases Supporting Security

- Rapid advances in science and technology have brought about fundamental changes in the nature of national security. Countries are accelerating research and development to ensure their technological superiority, and are focusing on acquisition of cutting-edge technologies that could become so-called “game changers” which dramatically alter the future character of warfare.
- Many countries regard their defense production and technological bases as essential elements of national defense, and are advancing initiatives such as support for the participation of their domestic companies and the encouragement of exports.

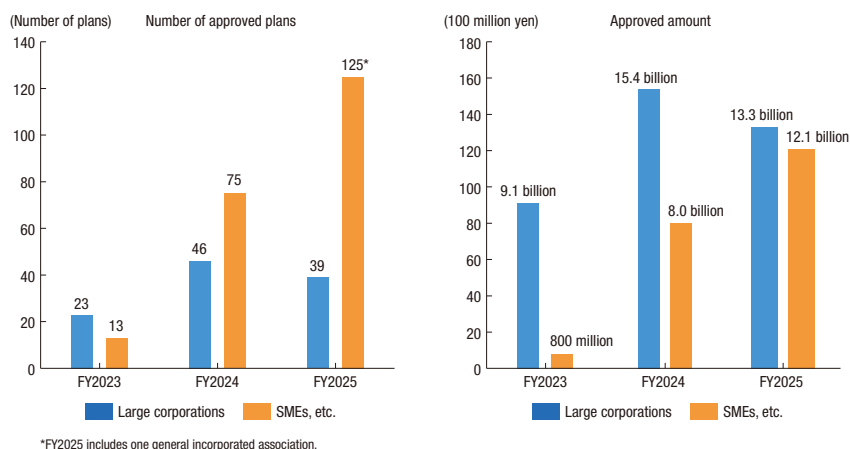
The Environment Surrounding Japan’s Defense Production and Technological Bases

- Amid the demand for fundamental reinforcement of defense capabilities, the role of the defense industry is becoming increasingly important in securing equipment necessary for the JSDF’s operations.
- Japan’s defense industry is facing various challenges, with some cases of companies deciding to withdraw from defense businesses or downsize their operations emerging from time to time. Consequently, this not only undermines the stable procurement of defense equipment essential for JSDF operations, but also causes the loss of a proper competitive environment and innovation in the long term, potentially leading to a loss of Japan’s technological superiority in security.

Chapter 2 Basic Approach to Maintaining and Enhancing the Defense Production and Technological Bases

Reinforcement of the Defense Production Base

- Japan’s defense industry is responsible for each stage of the life cycle of defense equipment (research, development, production, sustainment and maintenance, supply, decommissioning, etc.). The Act on Enhancing Defense Production and Technology Bases was enacted in 2023 in order to take necessary measures to maintain and enhance the capabilities of the defense industry to produce advanced defense equipment and ensure high operational rates.
- Following the Basic Policy, the Defense Minister shall approve plans for specific initiatives submitted by defense equipment manufacturers (Stable Manufacturing Plans). In FY2025, a total of 164 plans were approved, and 124 of these were initiatives of SMEs.

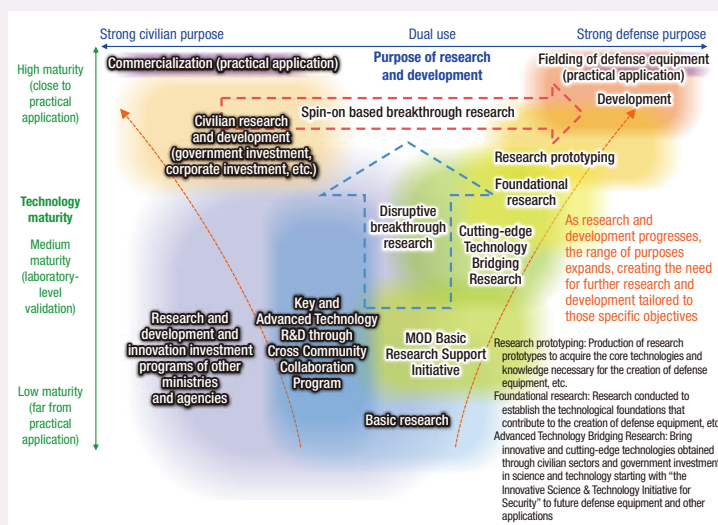


Record of Approvals for the Stable Manufacturing Plans

Reinforcement of the Defense Production and Technological Bases

Reinforcement of the Defense Technological Base

- In order to acquire defense equipment required to achieve uniquely Japanese new ways of defense based on the new ways of warfare, the use of our domestic technologies is extremely important. The enhancement of our scientific technologies and the creation of innovation are at the source of Japan's economic and social development and constitute a key element of our comprehensive national power integral to security. In addition, the active utilization of Japan's advanced technological capabilities developed by both its public and private sectors over the years in the area of national security without being constrained by existing approaches is an essential activity for strengthening Japan's architecture for national defense.
- The Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) and domestic research institutes such as national research and development agencies proactively engage in research collaborations and IT exchanges in order to ensure that advanced civilian technologies are incorporated and that research and development is conducted efficiently. In addition, ATLA maintains close cooperation on a routine basis with relevant ministries and agencies such as Cabinet Office and implements measures such as the Ministry of Defense (MOD) Basic Research Support Initiative (MOD funding) and Cutting-edge Technology Bridging Research.
- The Defense Innovation Science & Technology Institute was established under ATLA in October 2024 to fundamentally reinforce capabilities that create defense innovations and groundbreaking equipment that can transform the very nature of society. The Institute conducts breakthrough research to create new functions and technologies from a variety of rapidly evolving science and technology by actively introducing new approaches and methods.



The MOD's Research and Development Initiatives

Initiatives for Economic Security

- As inter-state competition intensifies in domains that cross the border between security and the economy, it is extremely important to enhance Japan's autonomy and safeguard Japan's superiority and indispensability through economic security measures, such as strengthening the resiliency of supply chains, preserving and fostering advanced technologies as well as maintaining and reinforcing Japan's defense production and technological bases as an integral component of defense capability itself in accordance with the NDS. The MOD, as the government agency in charge of security, actively participates in government-wide initiatives by sharing its knowledge and needs related to maintaining and reinforcing Japan's defense production and technological bases, which have been amassed over the years.

Defense Production and Technological Bases and Innovation

- Reinforcing defense capabilities is intended to prevent invasion before it occurs by maintaining defense capabilities that are both necessary and sufficient, thereby protecting Japan's peace and independence, which form the fundamental basis of the lives of its citizens. Such a stable security environment is indispensable for economic growth, and it is important to create an environment in which Japan's economy can grow through the reinforcement of defense capabilities.
- In addition to the significant increase in defense industry orders resulting from higher defense expenditures, reinforcing the defense production base through measures such as introducing mechanisms to assess corporate efforts and calculate appropriate profits for companies is expected to generate economic ripple effects and promote regional economic revitalization, including job creation in related industries, as well as technological ripple effects into the civilian sector.
- Regarding technological ripple effects into the civilian sector, cutting-edge science and technology are now advancing at an accelerating pace, making it extremely difficult in practice to distinguish between technologies for civilian and security applications. Against this backdrop, it is generally believed that increase in defense expenditures lead to increase in demand, while research and development of defense equipment is expected not only to facilitate the acquisition of necessary equipment, but also to help generate a variety of products and services through the transfer of advanced technologies to the civilian sector.
- Defense business not only possesses a high degree of public value by directly contributing to the protection of citizens' lives, but also contributes to Japan's economic growth through ripple effects into the civilian sector.

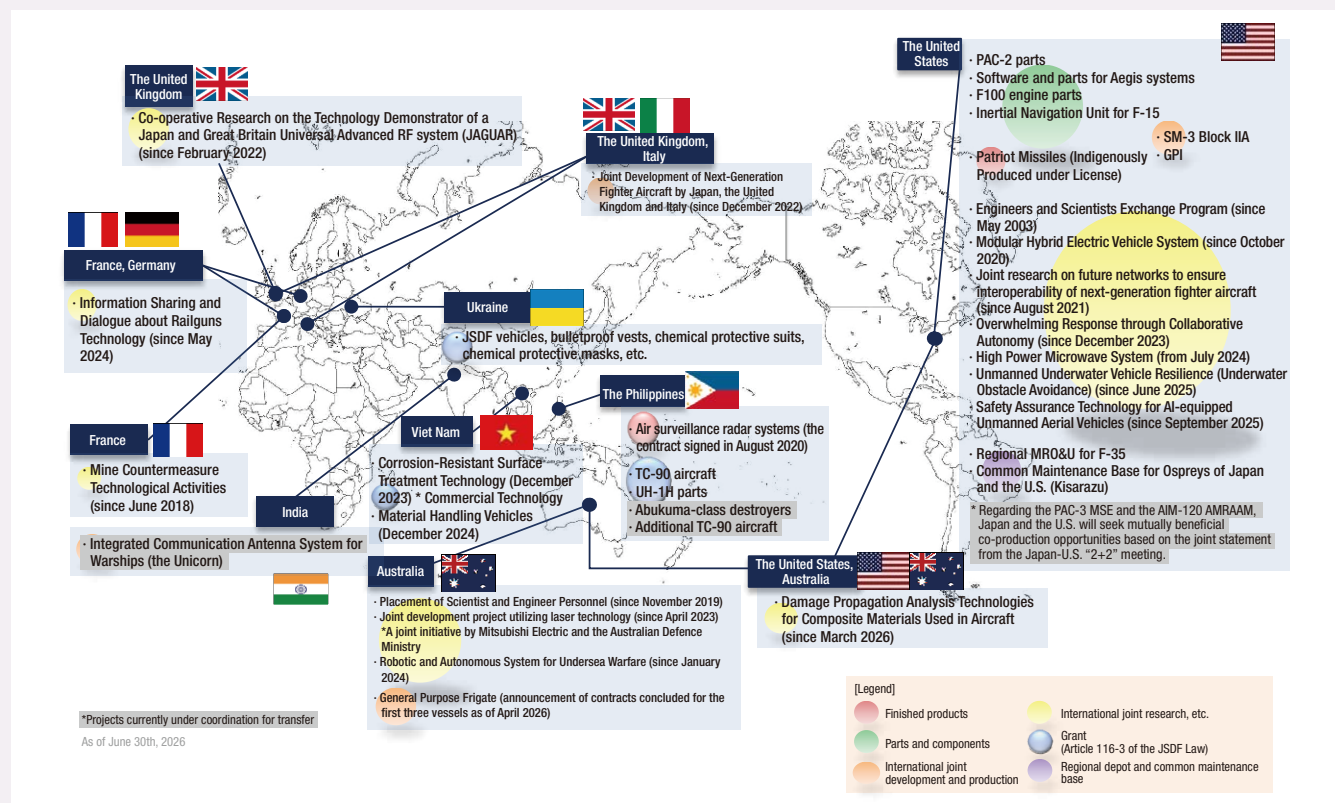
Chapter 3 Promotion of Defense Equipment Transfer and Technology Cooperation

The Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology

- The transfer of defense equipment and technology is a key policy instrument to ensure peace and stability, especially in the Indo-Pacific region, to deter unilateral changes to the status quo by force, create a desirable security environment for Japan, and provide assistance to countries that are subject to aggression, threat or use of force in violation of international law.
- The transfer of defense equipment overseas may be permitted when the equipment does not fall under the cases for which transfers are prohibited (First Principle), falls under the cases for which transfers may be permitted after strict examination (Second Principle), and appropriate control with respect to use for purposes other than those intended and transfer to third countries is ensured (Third Principle).
- Today, no country can protect its own peace and security on its own. To safeguard the peace and security of both itself and the international community, including its region, it is necessary to work together with allies and like-minded countries, including in the area of defense equipment. Based on this thinking, Japan revised the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and their Implementation Guidelines in April 2026 in order to further promote the transfer of defense equipment while maintaining its basic philosophy as a peace-loving nation, and thereby ensure Japan's security as well as peace and stability in the region and the international community.

Cooperation with the United States on Defense Equipment and Technology and Related Initiatives

- In order to ensure the Alliance's technological edge, interoperability, readiness, and sustained operational capability, Japan will further reinforce cooperation on defense equipment and technology through cooperative analysis and cooperative research in cutting-edge technology, cooperative development and production of defense equipment, improvement in mutual interchangeability, shared use and reinforcement of various networks, expansion of production and maintenance capabilities of U.S.-made equipment in Japan, and efforts to strengthen supply chains.
- In 2024, Japan and the U.S. in cooperation with relevant ministries and agencies, established the Forum on Defense Industrial Cooperation, Acquisition and Sustainment (DICAS), co-led by the Japan MOD and the U.S. Department of Defense. The purpose was to leverage each country's industrial base to meet long-term critical capability needs and maintain readiness.



Main defense equipment and technology cooperation with other countries (image)

Reinforcement of the Defense Production and Technological Bases

Building New Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation

- Considering that cooperation in defense equipment is an initiative that spans more than half a century from its conception to retirement, Japan is strengthening initiatives for cooperation on defense equipment and technology, including overseas transfer of defense equipment and international joint development, and it is striving to enhance its partners' military capabilities and strengthen mid- and long-term relationships with those countries.
- In August 2025, the Government of Australia selected the upgraded Mogami-class frigate (FFM) as its next general-purpose frigate. This selection reflects the high level of trust and recognition placed in defense equipment incorporating Japan's outstanding technologies. Going forward, Japan and Australia will jointly develop and produce a total of 11 frigates. In April 2026, Defense Minister Koizumi and Deputy Prime Minister of Australia and Minister for Defence Marles announced the conclusion of contracts covering the first three vessels.
- Under the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) announced in December 2022, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Italy will bring together their technologies to jointly develop an advanced fighter aircraft that will ensure future air superiority, while sharing development costs and risks. To establish an efficient framework for trilateral cooperation, the countries signed the Convention on the Establishment of the GCAP International Government Organisation (GIGO), and GIGO was established in December 2024. Subsequently, in June 2025, Joint Venture (JV) "Edgewing" was established by the industry partners as a corresponding organization.



Mogami-class frigate

Chapter 4 Equipment Optimization Efforts

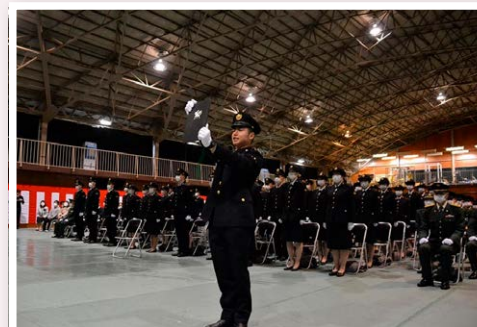
- In order to acquire sufficient capabilities for cross-domain operations in view of the aging population with a declining birth rate and the severe fiscal situation, it is essential to further promote initiatives to optimize equipment structure.
- In the underwater and other domains, research began in FY2024 on stealthy, combat-supporting, multi-purpose unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) that selectively carry functions such as surveillance and launching of anti-ship missiles to support manned vessels. In addition, the development of unmanned amphibious vehicles that can act autonomously in amphibious operations began in 2024. These vehicles are intended to perform missions such as transporting supplies from the sea to areas near troops. In parallel, research and development on combat support UAVs that operate in collaboration with manned aircraft, including next-generation fighter aircraft.
- In equipment procurement, by properly combining the introduction of new, high performance equipment, along with life extension and improvement of existing equipment, the MOD/JSDF will efficiently secure necessary and sufficient quality and quantity of defense capability. In this regard, the MOD/JSDF will strengthen its project management throughout its equipment life-cycle, including during its research and development activities, and reduce the life-cycle costs to improve cost effectiveness. In addition, by incorporating advanced civilian technologies, the MOD/JSDF will steadily realize acceleration of defense equipment deployment for areas that could directly affect the JSDF's current and future ways of warfare and are particularly urgent and significant from a policy perspective.
- In response to the issues identified by the special defense inspection on submarine repair contracts implemented from 2024 to 2025, a review was conducted to further enhance the effectiveness of cost and system inspections and to expand the scope of contracts requiring the submission of authentic documentation. Through these efforts, the MOD is working to prevent the recurrence of misconduct, enhance fairness and transparency in procurement, and ensure proper contracts.

Reinforcing the Human Resource Base

Chapter 1 The Professionalism of JSDF Personnel

JSDF Personnel Fulfilling Their Missions across Diverse Duty Stations

- Japan stands at the forefront of dramatic changes in the global balance of power. The Ministry of Defense (MOD)/Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) has continuously pursued self-improvement, with their unwavering mission to defend Japan firmly in mind.
- JSDF personnel serve at camps, bases, and aboard vessels throughout Japan, as well as carry out missions, at sea, and overseas. The working environment and types of missions and duties are wide ranging, including surveillance in regions of extreme cold or intense heat, the operation of vessels on the deck under harsh sunlight, maintenance essential to the safe operation of aircraft, and assistance affected at disaster sites. Every member of the JSDF is a professional who is entrusted with the unwavering mission of protecting Japan's peace and independence, is expected to deliver results, and fulfills important responsibilities in their respective field.
- Among JSDF officers, there are commissioned officers (COs) who command units and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and enlisted personnel who form the core of those units. Bringing together the will and capabilities of all unit members is essential to accomplish any mission. COs must be able to understand the missions of each JSDF service and the operational policies of their units, to think about and accurately determine what units should do, and to lead their junior colleagues in the execution of those actions. NCOs are field specialists who form the core of units and play an active role. The specialties of the JSDF are highly diverse, and NCOs who are skilled and professional are indispensable in every field.
- Administrative officials are responsible for planning and developing various policies pertaining to overall security policy, including defense administration and JSDF operations, mainly at the internal bureaus of the MOD and the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA). They also handle the collection, analysis, and evaluation of international affairs information at the Defense Intelligence Headquarters (DIH) and perform administrative tasks at JSDF, the Regional Defense Bureaus, and other locations nationwide.
- Technical officials are engaged in policy planning and development related to defense facilities (headquarters, runways, magazines, etc.) and physical infrastructure such as defense equipment at the internal bureaus of the MOD and ATLA, etc. They are also responsible for collecting, analyzing, and evaluating cutting-edge technology information at the DIH; performing administrative tasks at JSDF facilities, the Regional Defense Bureaus, and other locations nationwide; constructing defense facilities; and carrying out research and development, efficient procurement, maintenance and sustainment of equipment essential for JSDF's operations; and providing mental health care for JSDF personnel.
- Instructors conduct advanced research across a broad spectrum of security domains and provide high-quality education to JSDF personnel at the National Defense Academy, National Defense Medical College, National Institute for Defense Studies, and other organizations.



Induction ceremony (GSDF)

Career Development Support of JSDF Personnel

- Not all personnel of the JSDF are fully qualified professionals at the time they join the MOD/JSDF. In order to develop JSDF personnel with the appropriate skills and capabilities, the MOD/JSDF provides a wide range of opportunities for personnel development, including unit-based education, training, and practical training, as well as other learning opportunities both within and outside the MOD. Through these opportunities, all personnel can become professional members of the JSDF, regardless of whether they are uniformed or civilian personnel, and regardless of their rank or years of service.
- Against this backdrop, it is necessary to promote a people-centered organization so that JSDF personnel engaged in the defense of Japan, which is the core mission of the MOD/JSDF, can approach their duties with a strong sense of purpose and fully demonstrate their capabilities. As part of these efforts, it is essential to advance working style reform aimed at further improving work-life balance, as well as initiatives to promote the active participation and advancement of diverse talent, including female employees.

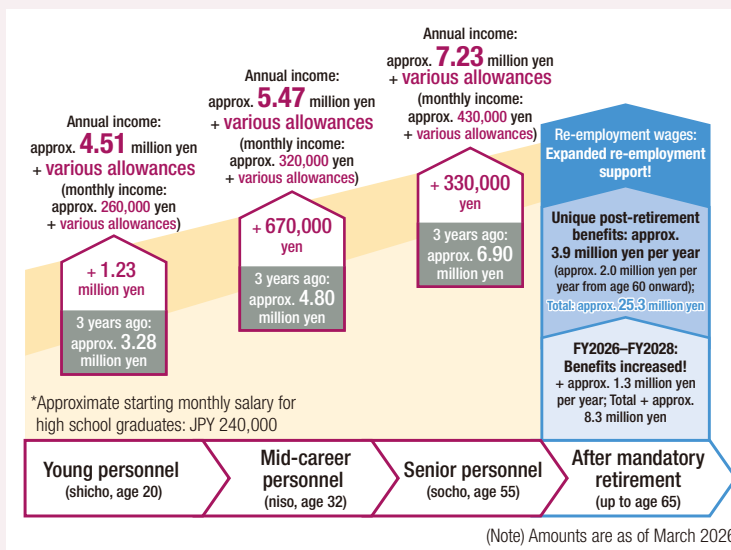


Personnel retiring due to reaching the mandatory retirement age

Chapter 2 Improvement of the Treatment and Working Environments and Establishing New Lifetime Career Plans of JSDF Personnel

Ministerial Meeting on Improving the Treatment and Working Environments and Establishing New Lifetime Career Plans of Self-Defense Forces Personnel

- In December 2024, the Basic Policy on Improving the Treatment and Working Environments and Establishing New Lifetime Career Plans of Self-Defense Forces Personnel (hereinafter referred to as the “Basic Policy”) was formulated at the Ministerial Meeting on Improving the Treatment and Working Environments and Establishing New Lifetime Career Plans of Self-Defense Forces Personnel.
- In line with the Basic Policy, improvements in treatment in terms of compensation have been made since FY2025. Specifically, a variety of measures were implemented, such as improvement of compensation by taking into account the unique nature of the mission and working environment, including establishing allowances or increasing the amounts of allowances totaling over 30 allowances, which is an unprecedented change; enhancement of conditions for securing a wide range of personnel including enlisted personnel; improvement of treatment for JSDF Reserve Personnel and others; and appropriate conferment of decorations for distinguished service.
- Moreover, as a result of salary revisions based on the 2025 recommendation of the National Personnel Authority, annual income increased by more than 200,000 yen not only for newly enlisted personnel but also for personnel in their 30s and 40s from the core of the units, bringing the compensation of all JSDF personnel to the highest level in history.
- In FY2025 approximately 11,000 personnel were employed compared to the plan to employ approximately 15,000 personnel, and the number of personnel who retired mid-career decreased by approximately 1,000 from the previous fiscal year to approximately 4,600. Nevertheless, as the JSDF continues to fall short of its target personnel levels, with the sufficiency rate standing at approximately 90%, securing human resources for uniformed JSDF personnel remains a matter of critical importance.



Initiatives for Reinforcement of the Human Resource Base

- In terms of strengthening efforts at the recruitment phase, the MOD/JSDF newly established “Officer Candidate Sergeants” for recruiting individuals who will become officers after serving for approximately five years as enlisted personnel and non-commissioned officers, and its recruitment began in 2025. The Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) newly established the “General Candidates for Officers (Specialized)” recruitment category for officers specializing in certain areas of expertise, such as cyber, and its recruitment began in FY2025. Furthermore, in line with the Basic Policy, with regard to fixed-term JSDF personnel who are appointed for two- or three-year terms, the JSDF Personnel Candidate System was abolished. A new fixed-term system was established, for which individuals will be recruited directly as JSDF personnel from the outset, and its recruitment began in FY2026.
- In terms of utilizing talent from the private sector, recruitment of uniformed JSDF personnel under the Fixed-Term JSDF Personnel System for employing people with specialized knowledge and experience began in FY2025.
- In March 2026, the MOD formulated the “Talent Management Strategy” for the first time, targeting defense officials, instructors, and other talent. Under this Strategy, the MOD regards each employee as valuable talent and is advancing measures aimed at boosting sense of worthwhile engagement and maximizing individual potential.
- The MOD has been reviewing systems for the stable recruitment of JSDF Reserve Personnel and others, including relaxing the age requirements. In FY2025, the MOD implemented substantial improvements in treatment, including increases in allowances for JSDF

Reserve Personnel and JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel, the provision of continuous service incentive allowances, accelerated replacement of uniforms and equipment, and the establishment of the Special Subsidy for Ensuring Business Continuity of JSDF Reserve Personnel for JSDF Reserve Personnel and JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel who operate their own businesses, such as sole proprietors. Moreover, in order to establish an environment that enables national and local civil servants serving concurrently as JSDF Reserve Personnel or related personnel to respond to call-up orders, the government submitted to the Diet the “Bill on Special Provisions for Concurrent Employment of National and Local Public Employees to Ensure the Smooth Execution of Duties by Self-Defense Force Reserve Personnel and Others.”

- To ensure that salaries reflect the special nature of the duties and working environment of JSDF personnel, as well as the constraints and burdens imposed upon them, and based on the Prime Minister's instructions, the MOD is steadily advancing consideration in order to undertake an independent revision of the JSDF personnel compensation structure in FY2027, marking the first review of its kind since the establishment of the JSDF approximately 70 years ago. This consideration includes deliberations by the Personnel Treatment and Salary Subcommittee established within the Defense Personnel Review Board.
- In order to enable all JSDF personnel to demonstrate their own abilities while maintaining high morale and pride, the JSDF will confront these societal changes head-on and establish living and working environments aligned with the lifestyles of younger generations.
- With regard to human resource development, the GSDF High Technical School will be jointly operated by the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF as well as transformed into a coeducational school from FY2028. The MOD/JSDF will strengthen the joint education in each JSDF service as well as education and research including those of the cyber domain in each JSDF service and at the National Defense Academy. At the same time, the MOD/JSDF will promote standardization of the education curriculum and utilization of state-of-the-art technologies. Additionally, the National Defense Academy introduced a curriculum enabling its students to undertake four-year study programs at the U.S. Service Academies and other institutions. Students began studying at the U.S. Service Academies from FY2025.
- With regard to retirement, re-employment, and other such initiatives, based on the Basic Policy, the MOD is reviewing relevant systems, including raising the mandatory retirement age, promoting reappointment, and increasing the benefit level of the Compensation for Retirees Under Young-Age Retirement, as well as enhancing and strengthening re-employment support. Furthermore, through the use of the personnel reappointment system for former JSDF personnel who retired upon completion of their term of service, as well as those who retired mid-career due to unavoidable circumstances such as childcare or nursing care commitments or for employment in the private sector, 170 former JSDF personnel were hired in FY2025, including approximately 100 by the GSDF.

Securing Cyber Workforce

- In order to secure the cyber workforce, the MOD/JSDF will (1) ensure consistency in its policies for recruiting and developing its workforce and promote consideration of measures and cross-organizational cooperation related to the workforce; and (2) clarify its vision regarding the cyber workforce, engage with prospective personnel and external cyber workforce, and develop and deepen cooperative relationships with external entities.

Further Promotion of Work-Life Balance and Active Participation of Diverse Talent, Including Female Employees

- As part of working style reform to further promote work-life balance, each employee will strive to enhance their own sense of worthwhile engagement, while initiatives led by senior officials and others will also be promoted to improve employees' sense of worthwhile engagement, rectify long working hours, ensure flexibility in working hours and locations, and create an environment in which employees can continue to play an active role while balancing childcare and nursing care, thereby ensuring sense of comfort. Through these efforts, an environment will be established in which employees can fully demonstrate their abilities, while maintaining physical and mental health with high morale and pride.
- To promote the active participation of diverse talent including female employees, the MOD/SDF is undertaking efforts that include expanding the recruitment and promotion of women and developing relevant training frameworks, while also promoting the active participation of mid-career employees, senior talent, and others so that the abilities, expertise, and other strengths of diverse talent can be utilized to the fullest extent. As part of efforts to promote the active participation of female employees, in July 2025, restrictions on the assignment in certain NBC Defense Unit were lifted, resulting in the complete elimination of assignment restriction for female JSDF personnel across the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF.



Female JSDF personnel serving in the NBC Defense Unit



JSDF Reserve Personnel participating in training

Reinforcing the Human Resource Base

Developing an Environment with Zero Tolerance for Harassment of Any Kind

- The MOD/JSDF has been implementing ongoing initiatives that include the communication of messages by the Defense Minister and other executive officials; harassment prevention lectures for staff in managerial positions (including commanders) given by attorneys and other external experts; group training using role-playing methods; the establishment of consultation services via LINE messaging app that are available during holidays and outside working hours; the establishment of unified standards for disciplinary action to ensure their transparency and fairness; and the implementation of a “Harassment Prevention Month” initiative aimed at raising awareness of employees.

Support for Personnel and Their Families

- In the event of large-scale disasters and other events, the MOD/JSDF will cooperate with relevant external groups and others to support JSDF personnel families, which will include receiving cooperation in confirming the safety of the family members of personnel and providing them with assistance in their livelihoods.
- From the perspective of preventing personnel suicides, the MOD is promoting various mental health measures, while advancing efforts to appropriately address gambling addiction, which is one form of mental disorder.

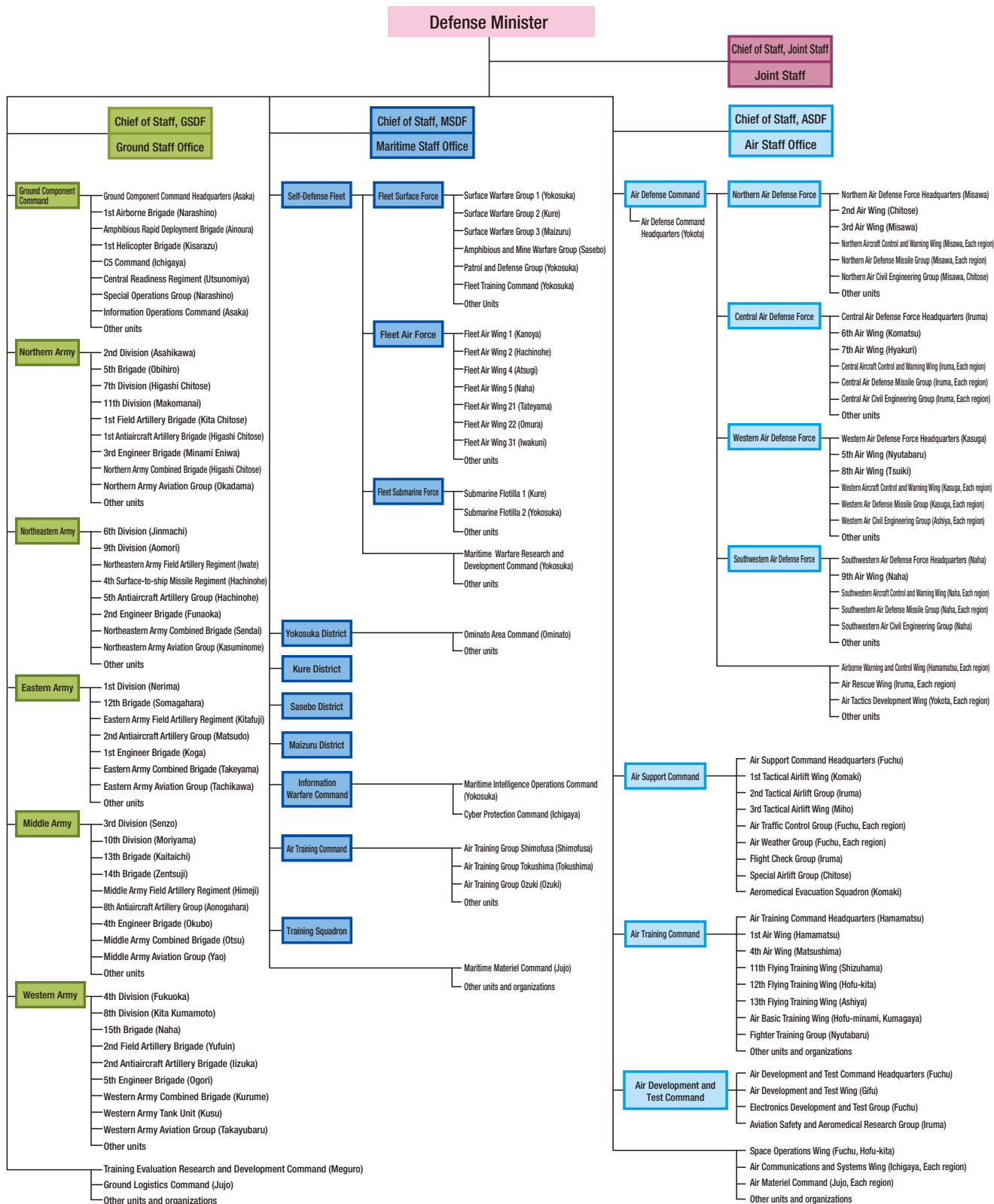
Others

- From the perspective of sustainability and resiliency, the JSDF medical force needs to be transformed into an organization that saves the lives of personnel carrying out their missions.
- To this end, the MOD/JSDF promotes the strengthening of medical functions to improve the combat trauma care capabilities with (i) Reinforcement of seamless medical care and evacuation systems from the frontlines to the final rear destination, (ii) Reinforcement of joint operation readiness for medical, and (iii) Fundamental management reform of the National Defense Medical College as the three pillars. In particular, the MOD/JSDF will establish a system for administering blood transfusions during combat trauma care, and establish a new system to autonomously secure and stockpile blood products.
- For the JSDF to respond to the increasingly severe, complex, and fast-paced strategic environment, strategic and agile defense policy planning and making are required. To this end, the MOD/JSDF will closely cooperate with relevant ministries and agencies, private research institutions, and private companies centered on the defense industry. In addition, the MOD/JSDF will reinforce its intellectual base by reviewing and reinforcing research systems of the MOD/JSDF, including the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS).

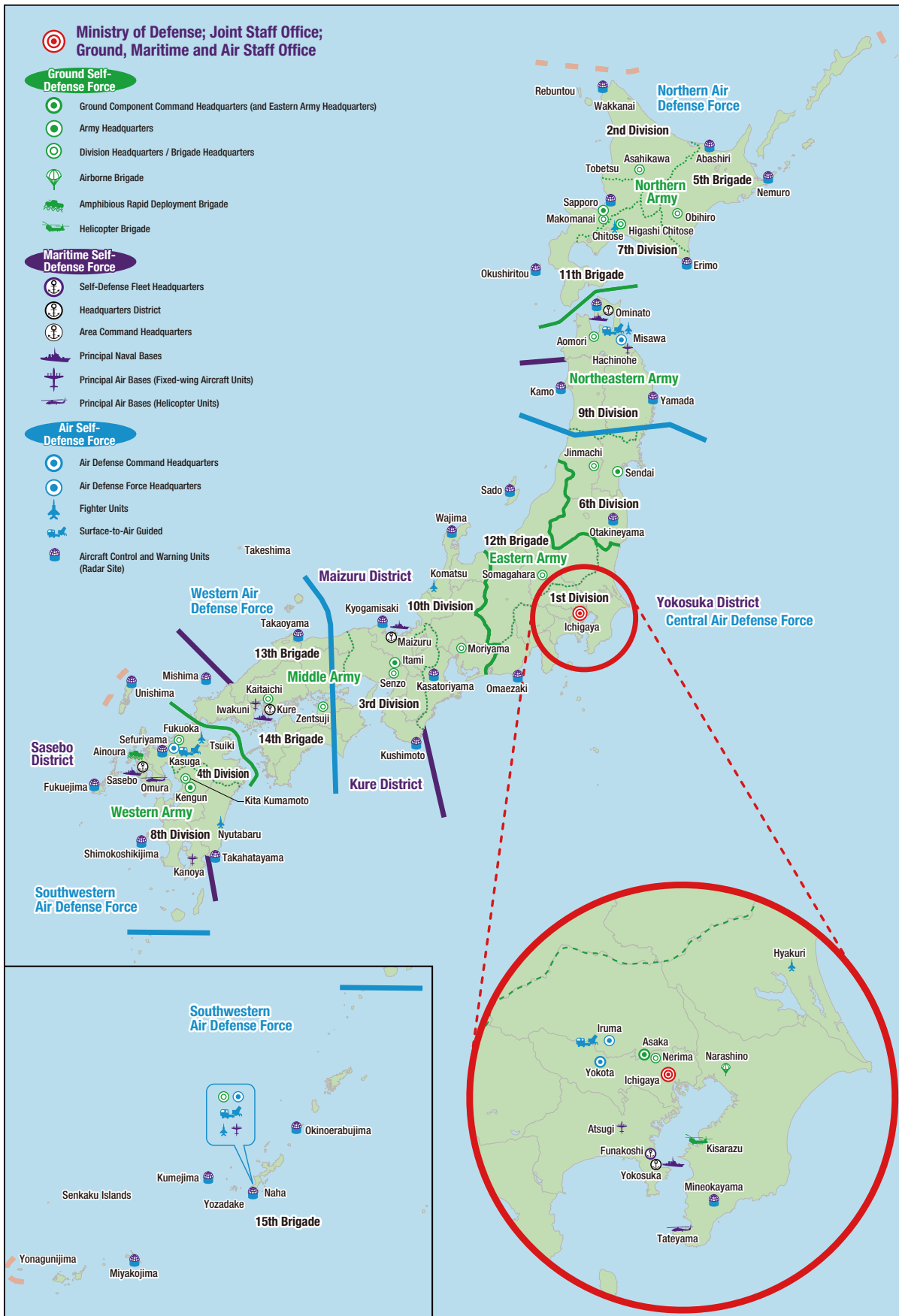


JSD personnel arriving after dropping their child at a workplace nursery

Organizational Diagram of the Self-Defense Forces



Location of Principal SDF Units [for illustrative purposes] [As of March 31, 2025]



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