
2026
DEFENSE OF JAPAN

DEFENSE OF JAPAN 2026

MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

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 cooperation[1] 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 PIPIR[3] frameworks, along with the hosting of JPIDD[4] 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.

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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

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COLUMN

Commentary "Commentary" provides more detailed explanations of specific topics from the perspective of the Japanese government.

VOICE "VOICE" contains thoughts and impressions from an individual standpoint by JSDF personnel on the field and outside concerned parties. (Rank and workplace are current as of March 31, 2026.)

Perspective "Perspective" is the analysis by a researcher of the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) from a more academic point of view based on an individual standpoint. This is the researcher's own version of analysis, relying on publicly available materials, and does not represent the official view of the Japanese government or the Ministry of Defense.

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Cover Illustration by KARIYA Hitomi

Born and raised in Kochi Prefecture, KARIYA Hitomi is an animator and illustrator known for her soft and ethereal artistic style. By rendering vivid landscapes and capturing the lively expressions of the people who inhabit them, she creates charming and harmonious worlds.

To depict the theme of this white paper, "Security for the Future," the cover features a futuristic cityscape that lies beyond technological evolution and innovations, as well as the smiling faces of young people who live in that future.

- The Defense of Japan white paper was first published in 1970, and has been published annually since 1976. The purpose of publishing this paper is to make the current status, issues and initiatives of Japan's defense common knowledge for as many people as possible, as simply as possible.
- This edition of Defense of Japan covers the defense and security environment of Japan and the initiatives of the MOD/JSDF during the one-year period from April 2025 to March 2026. However, certain important events that took place in April 2026 and beyond are also described.
- Maps in this paper may contain omissions depending on the design and layout and may not necessarily show the entire Japanese territory.
- To facilitate access to the latest information even after this White Paper is published, 2D codes have been included to link readers to the relevant pages on the MOD website (created based on URLs as of May 2026). Previous editions of Defense of Japan, including this edition, can be viewed on the MOD website, so please feel free to make use of it.

2026 DEFENSE of Japan
https://www.mod.go.jp/en/publ/w_paper/index.html

Legend

The terms below will be abbreviated as follows in this White Paper, and other terms may also be abbreviated appropriately. (Official names may be used in some cases for explanatory purposes.)

1. Ministry of Defense	→	MOD
2. Japan Self-Defense Forces	→	JSDF
3. Ground Self-Defense Force	→	GSDF
4. Maritime Self-Defense Force	→	MSDF
5. Air Self-Defense Force	→	ASDF
6. Joint Staff Office	→	JSO
7. Ground Staff Office	→	GSO
8. Maritime Staff Office	→	MSO
9. Air Staff Office	→	ASO
10. National Security Strategy of Japan	→	NSS
11. National Defense Strategy	→	NDS
12. Defense Buildup Program	→	DBP
13. United Nations	→	UN



Security for the Future

Japan faces a severe security environment.

It is **important to establish an architecture that dissuades** an adversary contemplating an invasion of Japan from attempting **an invasion**, and from this perspective, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) are advancing efforts to **further reinforce and transform Japan's defense capabilities**.

This feature briefly introduces **why reinforcing and transforming defense capabilities is necessary**, and explains how these efforts will have **positive impacts on our lives and the economy**.



The Nexus between Cutting-Edge Technology and Security

This photo captures numerous satellites moving across the sky in formation. A system of multiple small satellites working together is known as a “satellite constellation.”

Thanks to such technology, we can access stable, uninterrupted space-based observation and communications services.

In the security realm, satellite constellations support battlespace awareness, which shapes the course of operations, as well as communications between distant units.

Photo: EPA-Jiji

Turning Uncertainty about the Future into Hope

Today, we are confronted with challenges, including a declining birthrate, rising prices, an increasingly tense international situation, and the decline of regional areas.

To turn these uncertainties into hope, the Government of Japan is promoting initiatives that invest in a wide range of sectors and foster growth.

As part of this effort, the MOD is reinforcing and transforming defense capabilities, recognizing that investment in defense also contributes to economic growth.

First, let us examine events unfolding around the world.

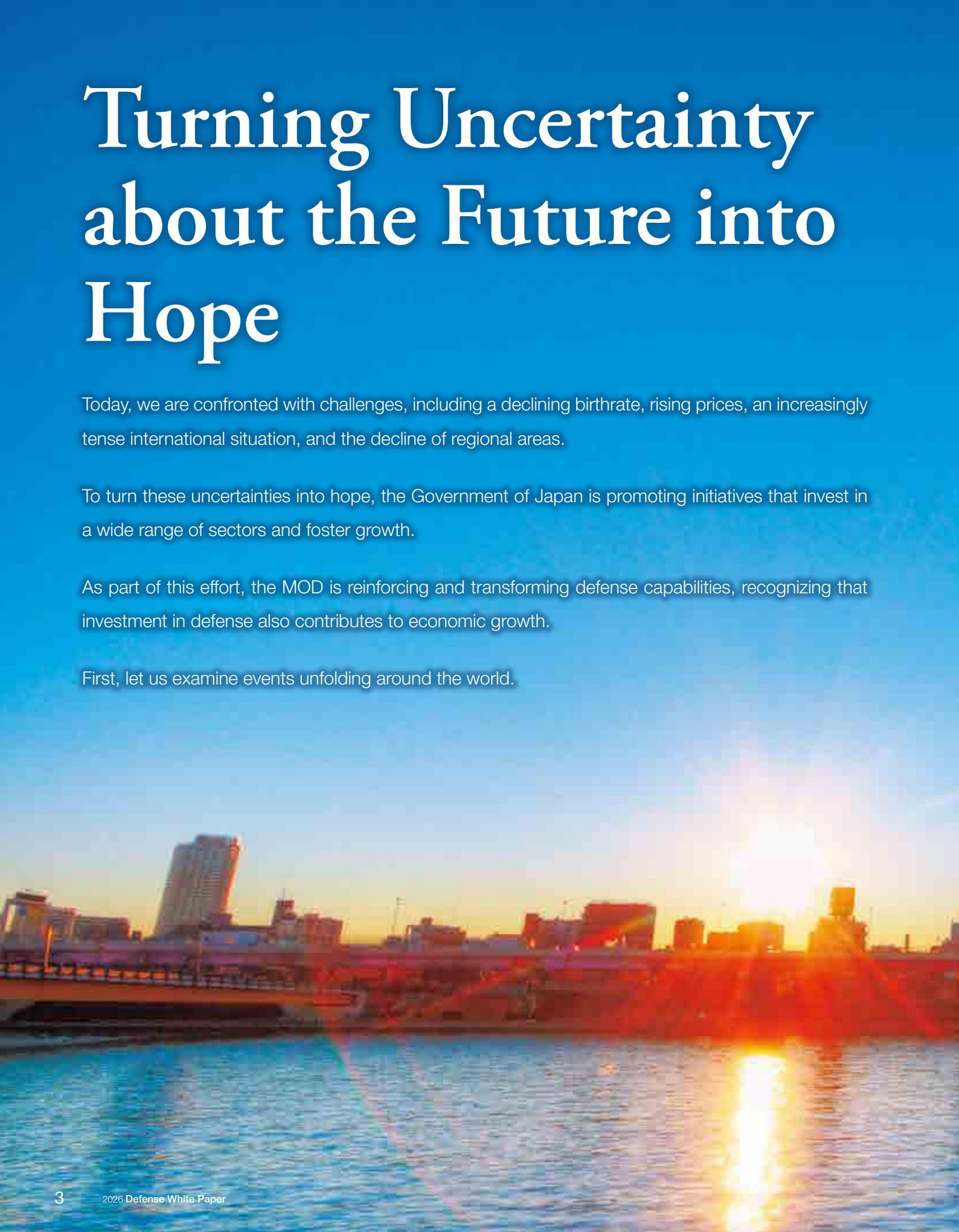
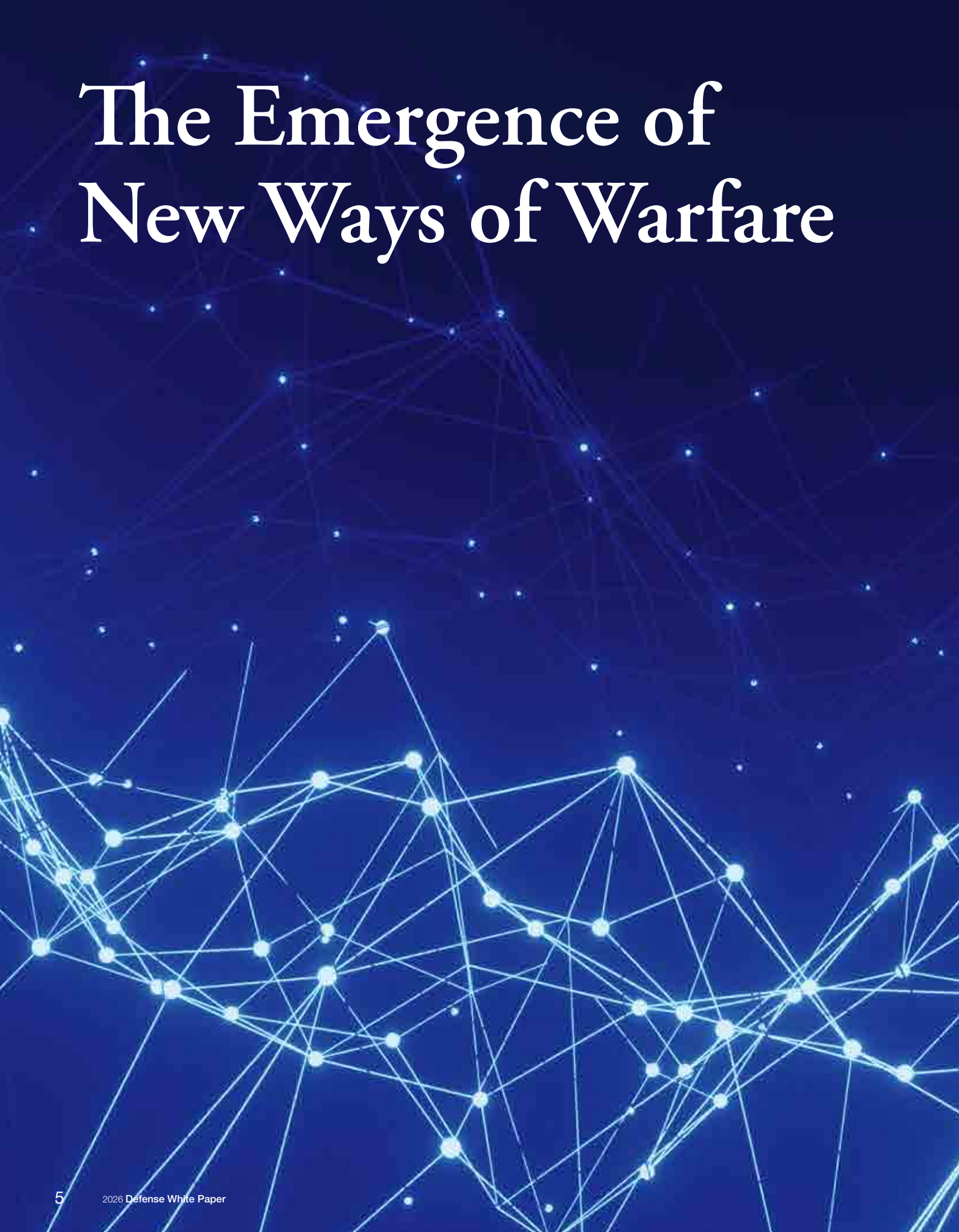




Photo: Jiji Press

The Emergence of New Ways of Warfare



Advances in science and technology have given rise to entirely new ways of warfare.

In Russia's aggression against Ukraine, **diverse, low-cost drones have been deployed in large numbers**. These drones are used to locate the enemy and strike its critical, high-cost equipment. Missiles and low-cost decoy drones are also used in combination to complicate the adversary's response and make attacks more complex.

In the aggression against Ukraine, camera-equipped drones, satellites, and other technologies are connected through networks to collect vast amounts of information. This information is **analyzed by AI** and shared immediately with commanders to assess the situation of units and make informed decisions. As a result, **rapid and accurate actions** can be taken in the field.

Other new ways of warfare include **spreading disinformation to confuse the adversary**.

As the above demonstrates, the use of technology and information has assumed a greater meaning in modern warfare.





Equipment and ways of warfare are also evolving very quickly. This has made it more important to swiftly update technologies to adapt to the circumstances.

For example, the use of drones in warfare has triggered widespread **jamming that renders drones inoperable**. This in turn has led to the use of **drones that are connected and controlled via optical cables**, which provide immunity against radio-frequency interference. These cables are very thin, with some as long as several dozen kilometers.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has continued for more than four years, underscoring the importance of stockpiling sufficient equipment and supplies during peacetime, as well as being ready to increase production in the event of a contingency. **Sustained operational capability is becoming increasingly essential for protecting one's country.**



Photo: NurPhoto via AFP

The Severe Security Environment Surrounding Japan





The security environment surrounding Japan has transformed significantly in recent years.

For the acquisition of territory or other objectives, countries have **attempted to unilaterally change the status quo by military force or other means in violation of international rules**.

In the Indo-Pacific region, **China and North Korea have increased their military power. China's defense expenditure has continued to grow substantially without sufficient transparency, while North Korea continues to develop nuclear weapons and missiles that cannot be easily intercepted**.

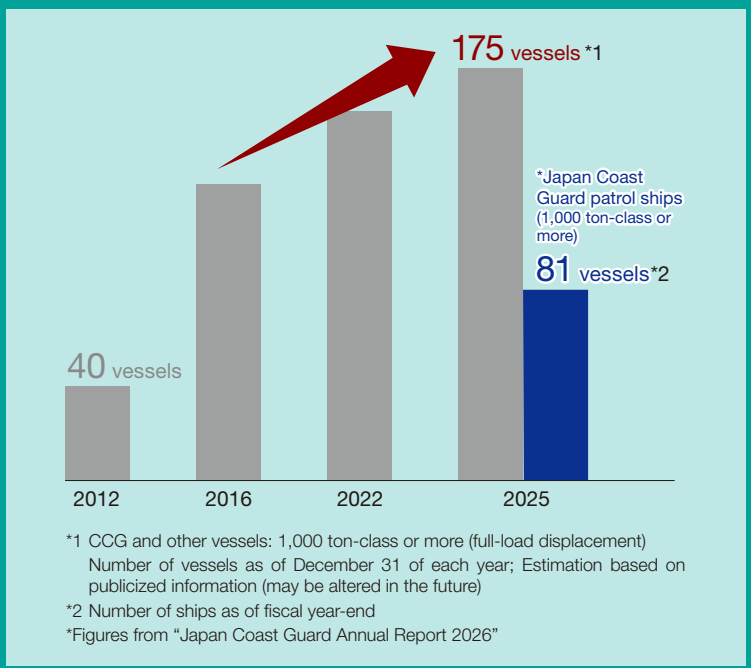
Russia and China, too, have **deepened their cooperation**, including enhancing joint military exercises and conducting joint flights of bombers and other aircraft over long distances.

Similarly, **North Korea and Russia have deepened their military cooperation. North Korea** has **supported Russia** with its aggression against Ukraine by providing weapons and ammunition and sending troops. **In return, North Korea may acquire missile and other weapon-related technologies, raising serious concerns.**

Chinese Activity in the East China Sea and Beyond

China's Activities around the Senkaku Islands

●Buildup of China Coast Guard (CCG) and other vessels



*1 CCG and other vessels: 1,000 ton-class or more (full-load displacement)
Number of vessels as of December 31 of each year; Estimation based on publicized information (may be altered in the future)
*2 Number of ships as of fiscal year-end
*Figures from "Japan Coast Guard Annual Report 2026"

●No. of days CCG and other vessels identified in the contiguous zone in a year



●No. of territorial sea intrusions by CCG and other vessels in a year

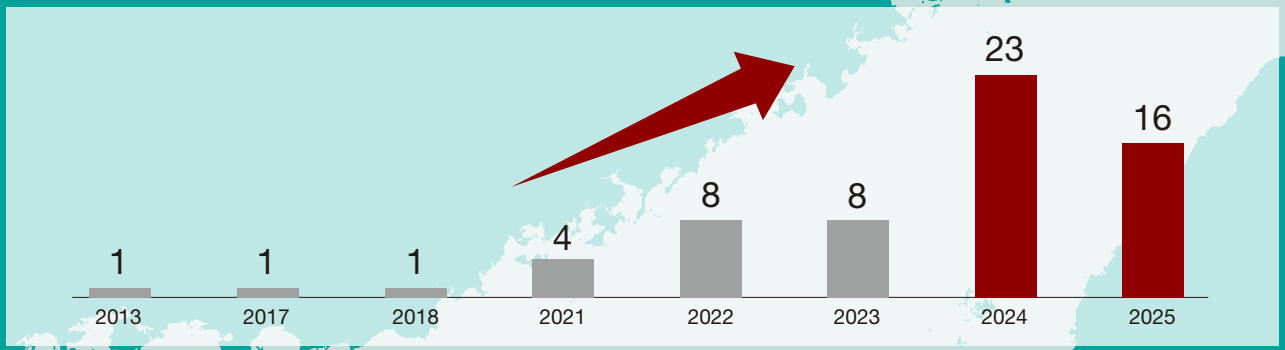


Naval vessels maintain a persistent presence around the Senkaku Islands.

Increase in Drone Activity

●No. of announced (including presumed) drone activity

*Including activities outside of the East China Sea



Backed by military power, **China has strengthened its attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion**.

These military activities by China **could have a serious impact on the security of Japan**.

Aug. 2024: Intelligence-gathering aircraft violated Japan's territorial airspace over the waters off the Danjo-gunto Islands

Apr. 2022 onwards: PLA Navy survey vessels sailed nine times in Japanese waters near Yakushima Island

May 2025: A helicopter launched from a China Coast Guard vessel violated Japan's territorial airspace over the waters around the Senkaku Islands

Dec. 2025: Chinese military fighter aircraft intermittently illuminated a JSDF aircraft with its radar

Sep. 2024: CV Liaoning sailed waters adjacent to Japanese waters between Yonaguni Island and Iriomote Island

*Conceptual image

Chinese Aircraft Carriers in the Pacific Ocean

●CV “Liaoning” (first aircraft carrier)



●CV “Shandong” (second aircraft carrier)



First Island Chain

Naha

2025

2025

2021

2016

2021

2020

2018

2025

2022

2024

2023

2024

Aircraft carriers capable of operating numerous fighters at sea have become increasingly active in the Pacific Ocean. China has commissioned its **third aircraft carrier** and is **steadily enhancing its operational capabilities in distant waters and airspace**.

=Liaoning =Shandong

●CV "Fujian" (third aircraft carrier)



Second Island Chain

Iwo-To

Minamitorishima

2025

June 2025 An aircraft carrier in waters east of Iwo-To confirmed and announced by the MOD/JSDF for the first time

2022

Guam

*Conceptual image

*The image from the so-called First Island Chain to the Second Island Chain is based on a U.S. Department of Defense report.

Military Partnership between Russia and China

(1) Joint Naval Exercise “Maritime Cooperation”

Since 2012, the Chinese and Russian navies have conducted a joint exercise almost every year. The scope of the exercise has expanded each year.

*Most recently, it was conducted in the South China Sea in 2024 and the Sea of Japan in 2025.

(Illustrated is “Maritime Cooperation 2025”)

(2) Joint Bomber Flight

Since 2019, the two countries have conducted joint bomber flights once or twice a year.

Moreover, in December 2025, Chinese and Russian bombers flew from the East China Sea through the airspace between the main island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island, for the first time in a joint flight, conducted a long-distance flight over the Pacific Ocean reaching the waters off Shikoku.

(Examples shown are from 2024 and 2025)



●Joint flight, December 2025

(3) Joint Navigation

Since 2021, the two countries have sailed together every year. Their operational area is expanding.

(Illustrated are the 2021 and 2023 navigations)



●China-Russia joint navigation, October 2021

Russia and China are **strengthening strategic cooperation** through various exercises and joint operation of bombers and vessels.

(4) Mutual Participation in Military Exercises

Since 2018, the two countries have continued **mutual participation in each other's military exercises**.
(Illustrated is "Northern/Interaction 2024" in September 2024)



Military Cooperation between North Korea and Russia



As Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues, **North Korea** has expanded military cooperation with Russia by **providing weapons and ammunition**, including ballistic missiles, and **sending troops to Russia**.

Such cooperation presents **the risk of North Korea strengthening its military power**. For example, data provided by Russia have reportedly improved the accuracy of **ballistic missiles** used in attacks against Ukraine, **raising concerns that their performance could be enhanced**. North Korean troops are also **gaining experience with new ways of warfare using drones and other technologies**, and **the lessons learned could be disseminated throughout the North Korean military**.

Furthermore, the possibility of Russia **transferring nuclear weapons and missile-related technologies to North Korea** in return for its support **remains a serious concern**.



Photo: Korea News Service-Jiji

Protecting Japan



In light of the new ways of warfare emerging across the world and the security environment surrounding Japan, it is necessary to consider what should be done to protect Japan.

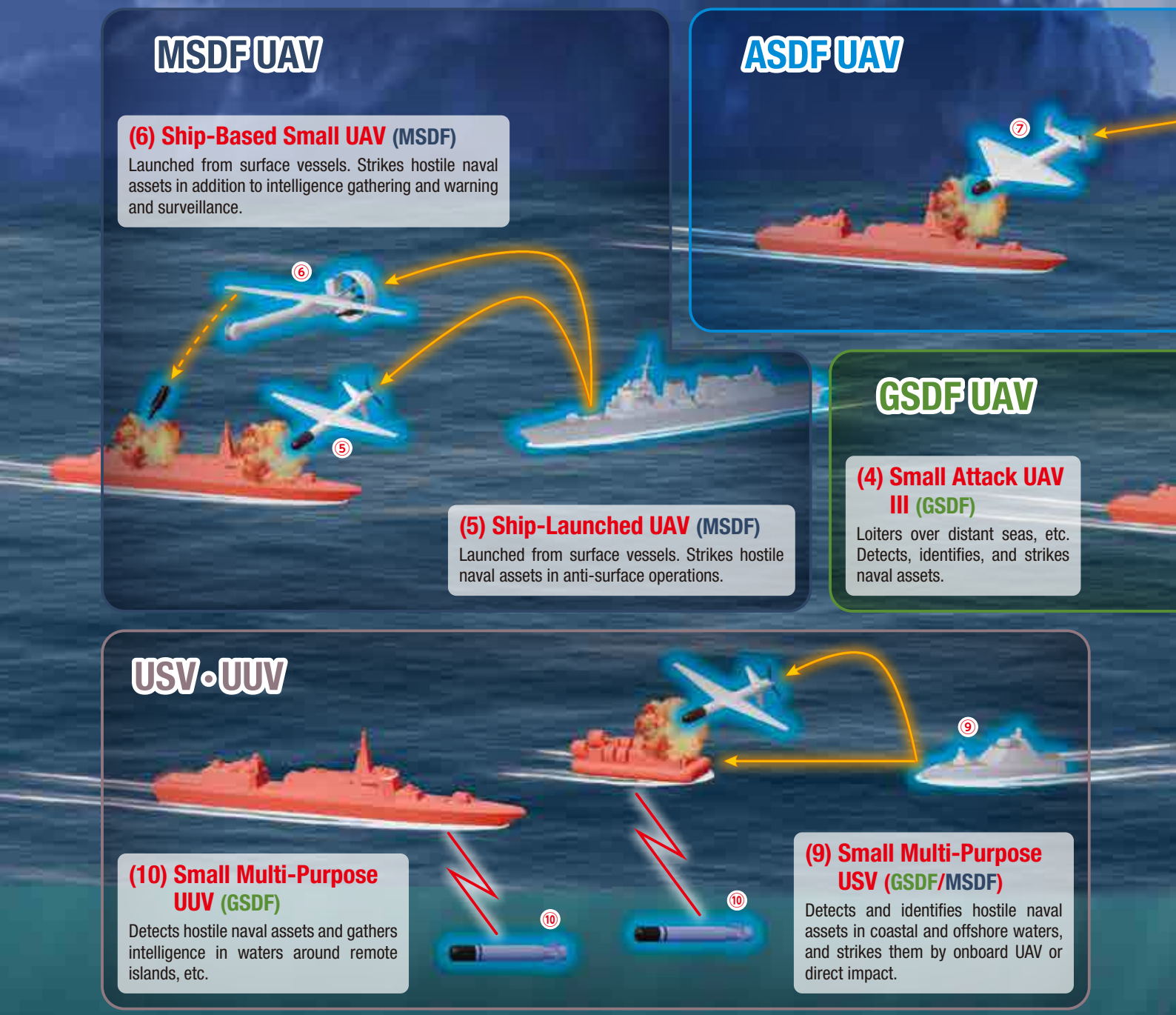
The example of Russia's aggression against Ukraine highlights an important point: **a military power like Russia, at some point, became inclined to launch an aggression against another country**. Because it is difficult to accurately discern a state's intentions and actions from the outside, Japan must **maintain defense capabilities necessary for responding to an adversary's action, based on not only its intentions but also its capabilities**.

The reinforcement of Japan's defense capabilities is intended to provide sufficient capacity to **prevent aggression before it occurs**, thereby protecting the peace and independence that form the fundamental basis of the lives of Japanese nationals. **Peace and independence are also indispensable** for economic growth. **Reinforcing defense capabilities** therefore contributes to establishing the foundation necessary **for Japan to sustain its economic growth in a stable environment**.



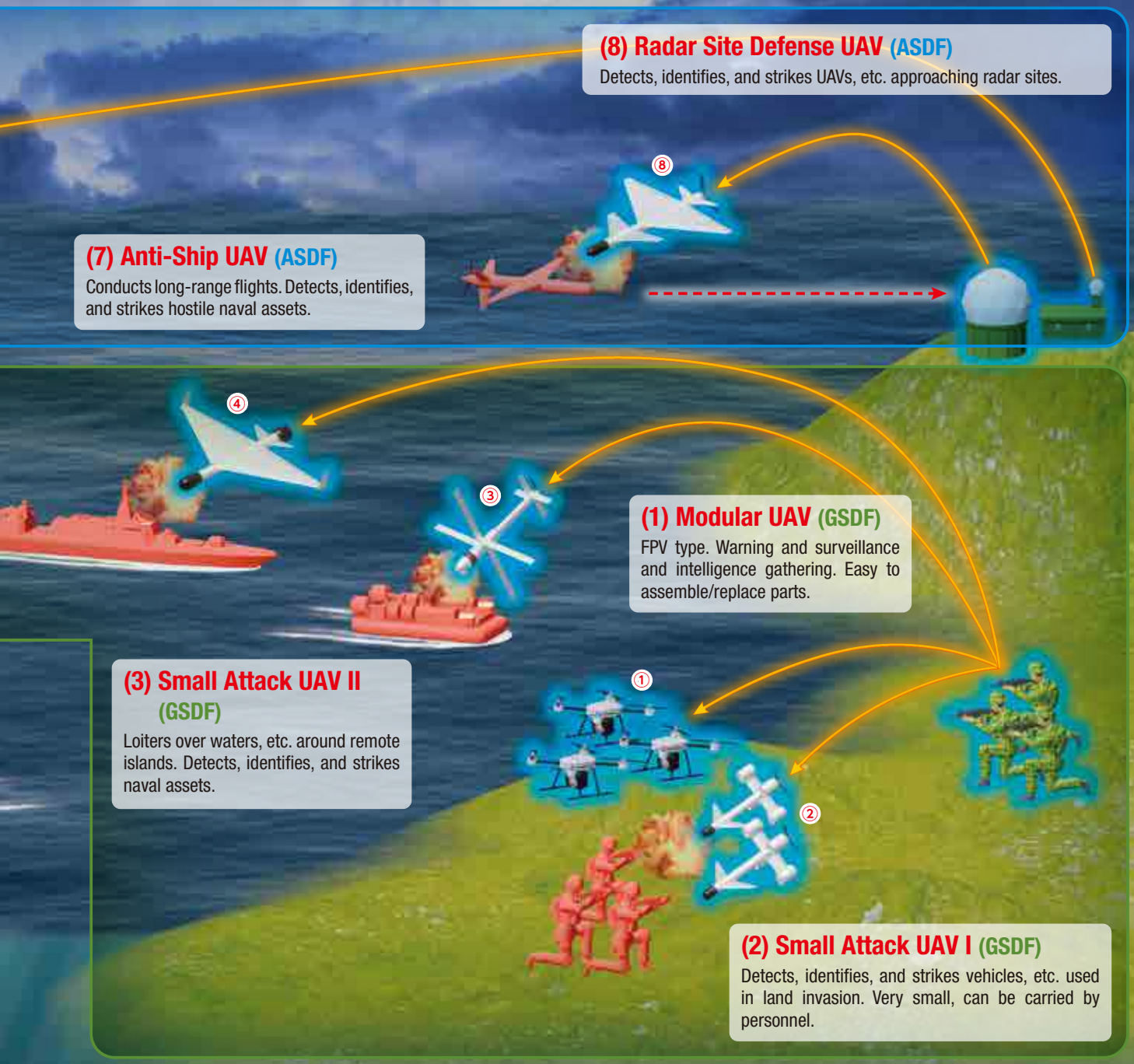
The Establishment of SHIELD

What tangible efforts are under way to reinforce defense capabilities? One is **protecting Japan using drones**.



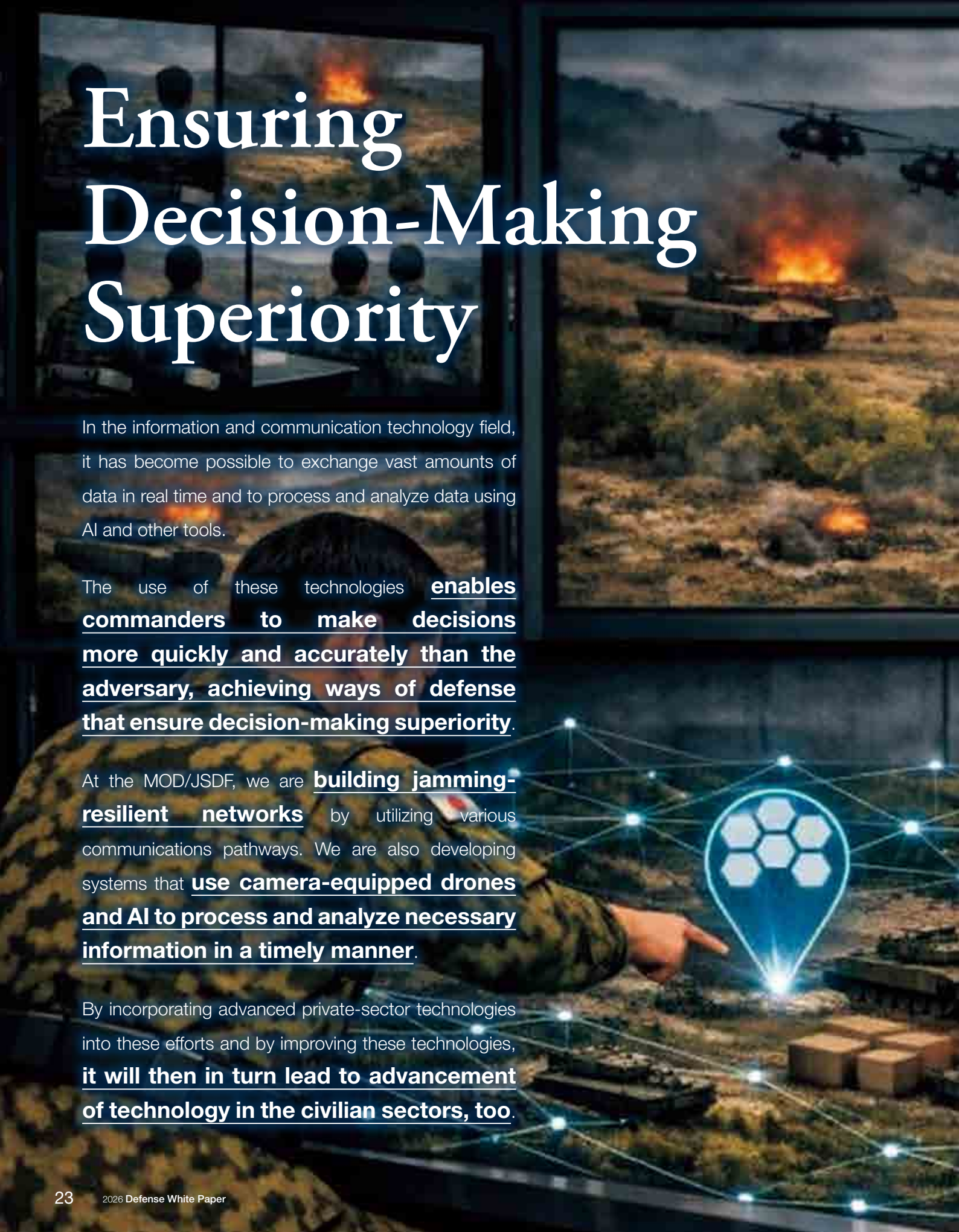
Synchronized, Hybrid, Integrated and Enhanced Littoral Defense

The MOD/JSDF is establishing **a defense architecture that utilizes numerous drones across the land, maritime, and air domains, combined with missiles that can be fired from distances beyond the reach of an adversary's attack**. This architecture will enable Japan to protect itself from an adversary while reducing risks to JSDF personnel.



UAV: Unmanned Aerial Vehicle USV: Unmanned Surface Vehicle UUV: Unmanned Underwater Vehicle

Ensuring Decision-Making Superiority



In the information and communication technology field, it has become possible to exchange vast amounts of data in real time and to process and analyze data using AI and other tools.

The use of these technologies **enables commanders to make decisions more quickly and accurately than the adversary, achieving ways of defense that ensure decision-making superiority**.

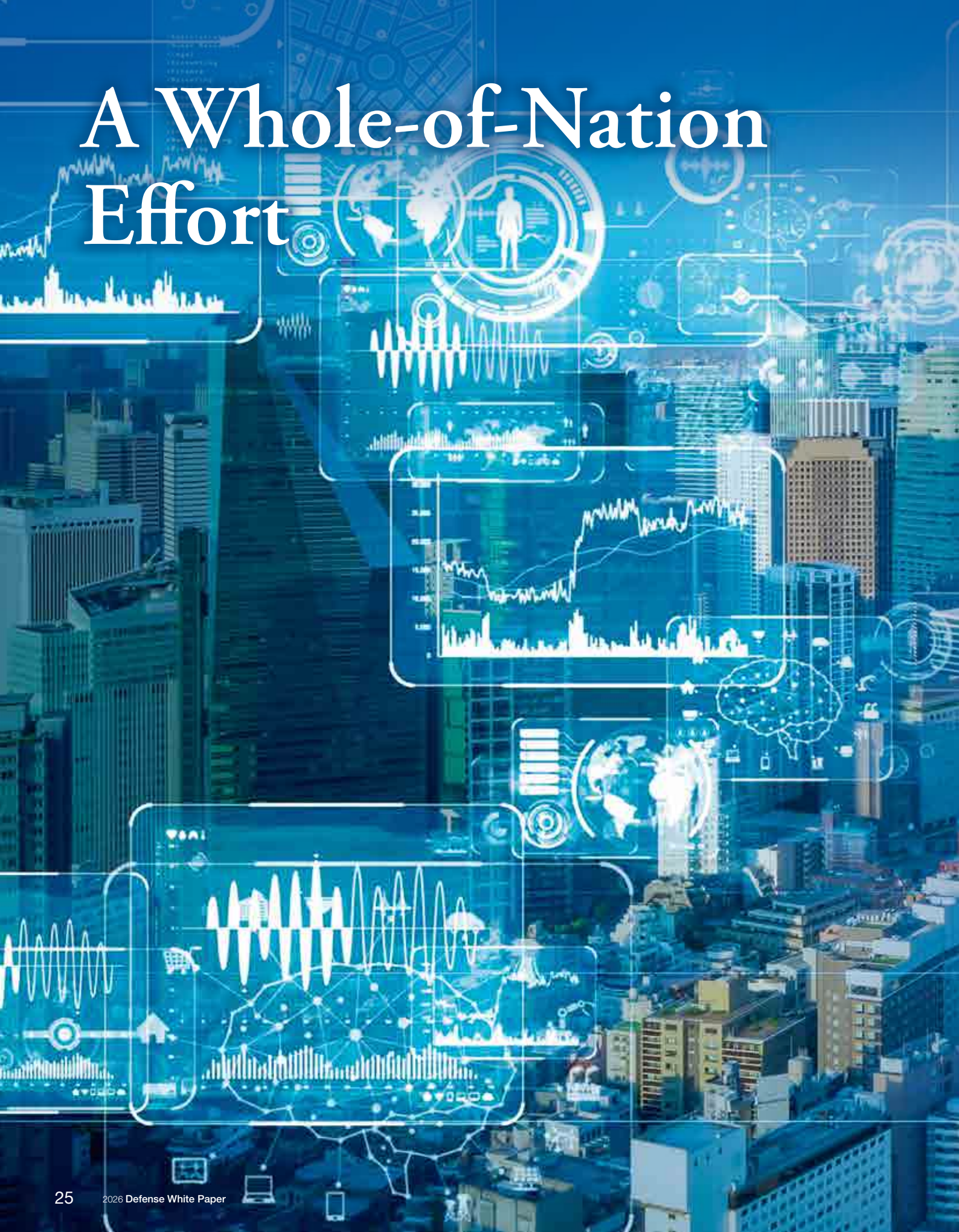
At the MOD/JSDF, we are **building jamming-resilient networks** by utilizing various communications pathways. We are also developing systems that **use camera-equipped drones and AI to process and analyze necessary information in a timely manner**.

By incorporating advanced private-sector technologies into these efforts and by improving these technologies, **it will then in turn lead to advancement of technology in the civilian sectors, too**.



*This image was created using generative AI.

A Whole-of-Nation Effort





Protecting Japan requires **not only the efforts of the MOD/JSDF, but also the coordinated efforts of the whole nation**.

For example, a wide range of enterprises are involved in manufacturing the equipment used by JSDF.

Therefore, **cyberattacks may target enterprises that manufacture the equipment of the JSDF, with the aim of monitoring or disrupting JSDF activities. Consequently, cyberattacks could lead to theft of sensitive information related to the equipment and impair the JSDF's ability to function**.

Moreover, these **cyberattacks may occur in not only the JSDF and their contractors but all enterprises and organizations in Japan**.

Hence, these risks must be addressed not by the JSDF alone but through **a whole-of-nation approach**.

Bolstering the security of all enterprises and organizations in Japan will contribute to protecting the peaceful livelihoods of Japanese nationals.

Cooperation with Japan's Ally and Like-Minded Countries



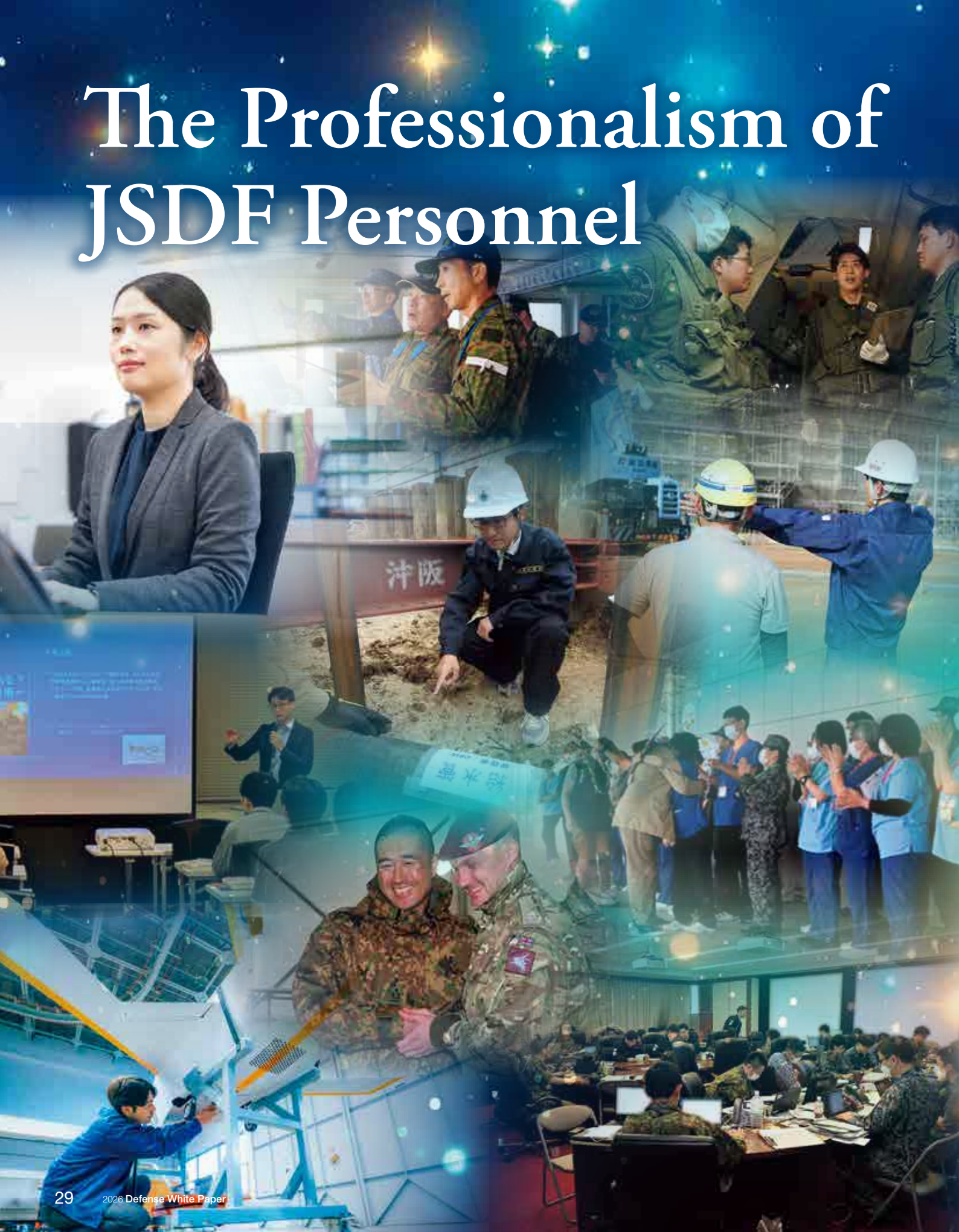
It goes without saying that Japan must provide for its own defense. However, in a severe security environment, **it is difficult for a single country to safeguard peace on its own**.

For example, **Russia's aggression against Ukraine in geographically distant Europe** is by no means unrelated to Japan. In particular, it **could deteriorate the security environment surrounding Japan** through military cooperation between North Korea and Russia.

In order to maintain peace and stability in this situation, it is essential to uphold values such as the rule of law and a rules-based order, and to **work more closely with its ally and like-minded countries with a view to strengthening deterrence capabilities of Japan and the region**.


Land Forces

The Professionalism of JSDF Personnel



JSDF personnel are the core of Japan's defense capabilities.

JSDF is composed of uniformed personnel who operate and command units on land, at sea, and in the air, administrative officials who draft policies and legislation, technical officials who conduct research on defense equipment and oversee facility improvement, and instructors engaged in research and education in the field of security.

Amid a severe security environment, protecting the lives and daily lives of Japanese nationals requires **every member of the JSDF** to be a **professional** with expertise and skills in their respective fields.

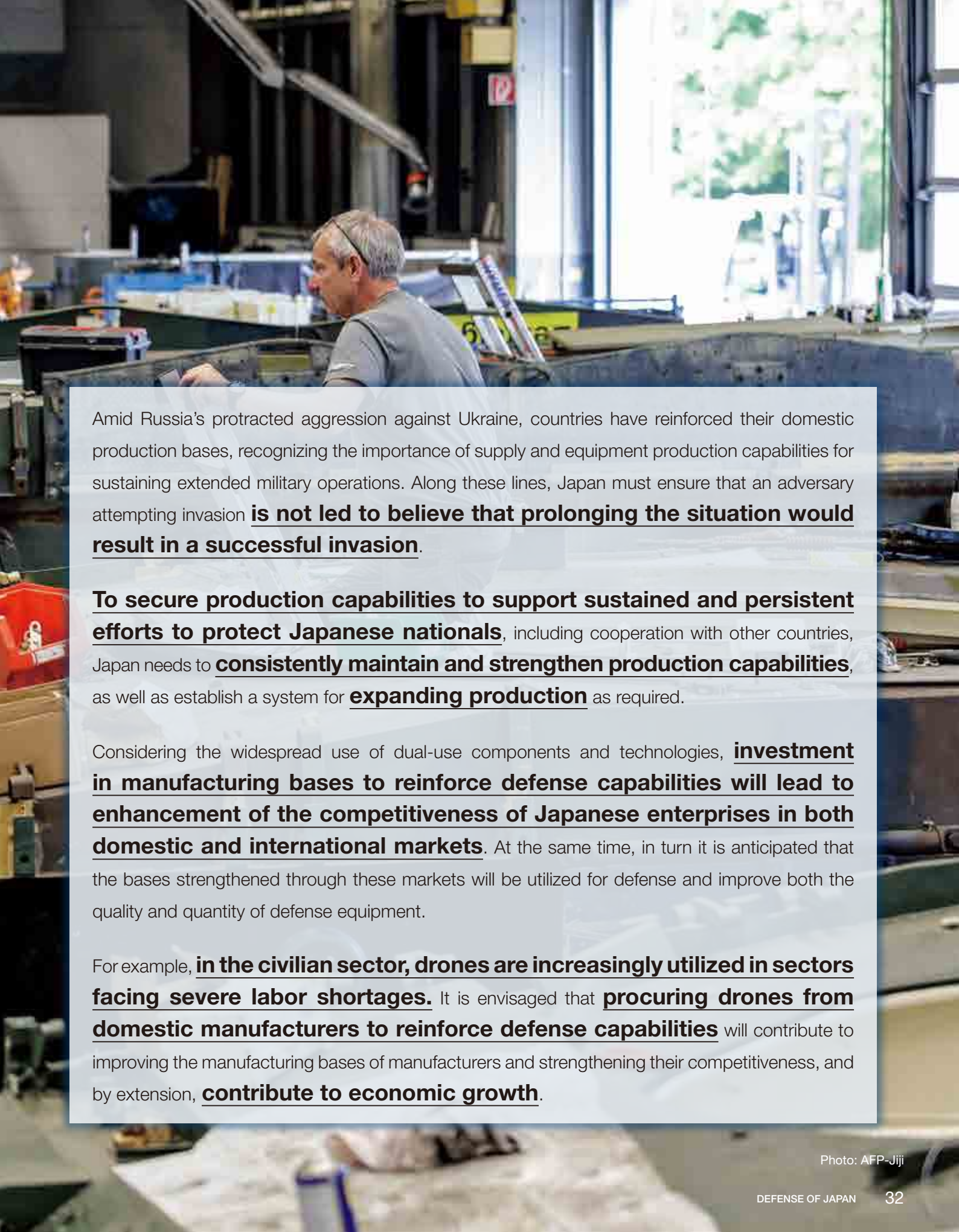
To ensure that all personnel can fully demonstrate their potential while maintaining high morale and pride, efforts are being made to **improve personnel treatment**, **including compensation and living and working environments**.

The MOD/JSDF will continue to **secure diverse and highly qualified personnel**, including those capable of operating drones and other equipment, to be newly introduced **to realize new ways of defense**.



Ensuring Sustained Operational Capability





Amid Russia's protracted aggression against Ukraine, countries have reinforced their domestic production bases, recognizing the importance of supply and equipment production capabilities for sustaining extended military operations. Along these lines, Japan must ensure that an adversary attempting invasion **is not led to believe that prolonging the situation would result in a successful invasion**.

To secure production capabilities to support sustained and persistent efforts to protect Japanese nationals, including cooperation with other countries, Japan needs to **consistently maintain and strengthen production capabilities**, as well as establish a system for **expanding production** as required.

Considering the widespread use of dual-use components and technologies, **investment in manufacturing bases to reinforce defense capabilities will lead to enhancement of the competitiveness of Japanese enterprises in both domestic and international markets**. At the same time, in turn it is anticipated that the bases strengthened through these markets will be utilized for defense and improve both the quality and quantity of defense equipment.

For example, **in the civilian sector, drones are increasingly utilized in sectors facing severe labor shortages.** It is envisaged that **procuring drones from domestic manufacturers to reinforce defense capabilities** will contribute to improving the manufacturing bases of manufacturers and strengthening their competitiveness, and by extension, **contribute to economic growth**.

Photo: AFP-Jiji

Ensuring Technological Superiority

It is important to rapidly apply cutting-edge science and technologies to defense equipment. Equally essential is the adoption of civilian technologies known as dual-use technologies. To this end, countries are **collaborating with research universities, national research and development agencies, and startups that are small and recently founded but possess advanced technological capabilities**.

The MOD/JSDF **supports basic research of advanced technologies to drive innovations with potential for defense applications**. It has also established mechanisms that speed up the entry of contracts between startups and the government.

The incorporation of dual-use technologies into defense equipment through these efforts is indispensable for reinforcing defense capabilities. Furthermore, these efforts are expected to **promote the discovery and development of cutting-edge science and technologies, thereby enhancing Japan's competitiveness and contributing to economic growth**.



Example of Dual-Use Technology

This photo shows a security company's drone that detects trespassers using AI and tracks them automatically.

The MOD/JSDF believes that developing dual-use technologies through a "spin-on" process—customizing civilian technologies and products for defense equipment purposes—and a "spin-off" process—applying technologies researched and developed for defense equipment to civilian uses—offers significant benefits for maintaining and strengthening domestic technological bases.

This drone is an example of a "spin-on" technology commercialized in the civilian sector and demonstrated by the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA), as well as an example of a "spin-off" technology researched and developed for the security sector and subsequently utilized in the civilian sector.

Photo: SECOM CO., LTD.

Conclusion

The security environment surrounding Japan is becoming increasingly severe. Under these circumstances, the MOD is undertaking a wide range of efforts to protect peace and independence that are most important to our lives.

As this feature has shown, they include initiatives that directly or indirectly bring positive impacts on our lives and economy.



The main text of the “Defense of Japan” white paper provides even more detailed, easy-to-understand explanations of international affairs and defense policy.

We hope you will continue reading.



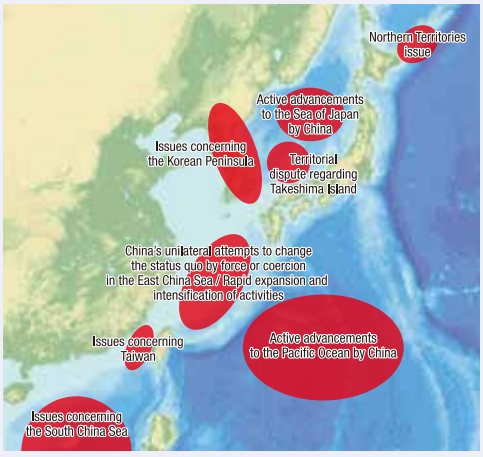
Part I

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.



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

- 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.

Chapter 3 Defense Policies of Other Countries and Regions

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

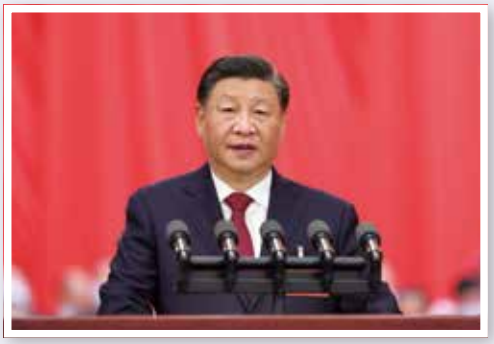
- The second Trump administration was formed in January 2025. The National Security Strategy was released in December of the same year, followed by the National Defense Strategy in January 2026. These documents clarified the security strategy envisioned by the second Trump administration.
- Under the 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.



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]

- 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.

Part I

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.



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

- 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.

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.

Part II

Japan's Security and Defense Policy

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

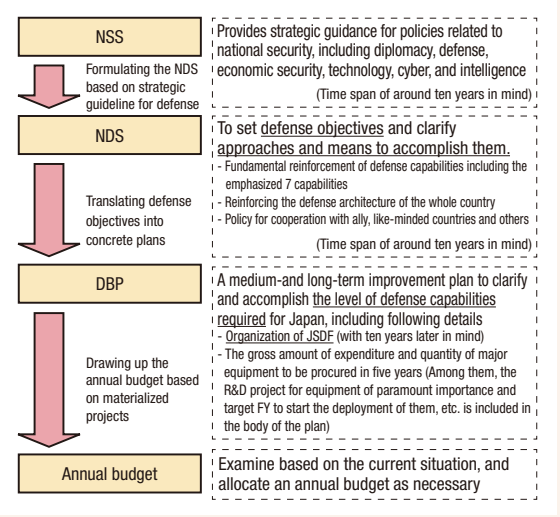
Chapter 2 The Three Strategic Documents, including the National Security Strategy of Japan, and Defense-Related Expenditures

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, 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 number of State Defense Minister was increased from one to two 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.

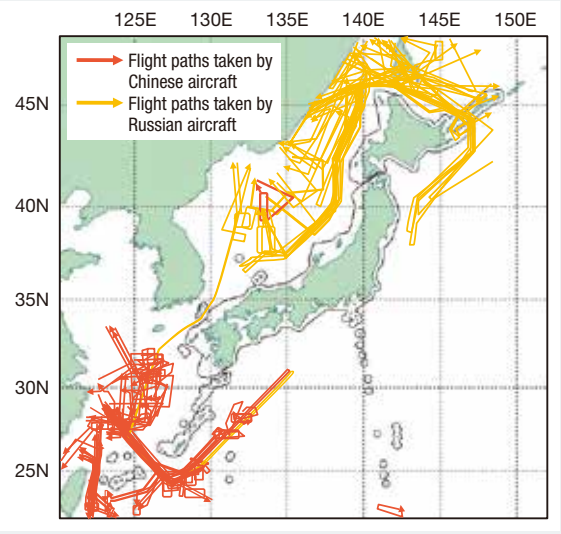
Part III

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.



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

- 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.

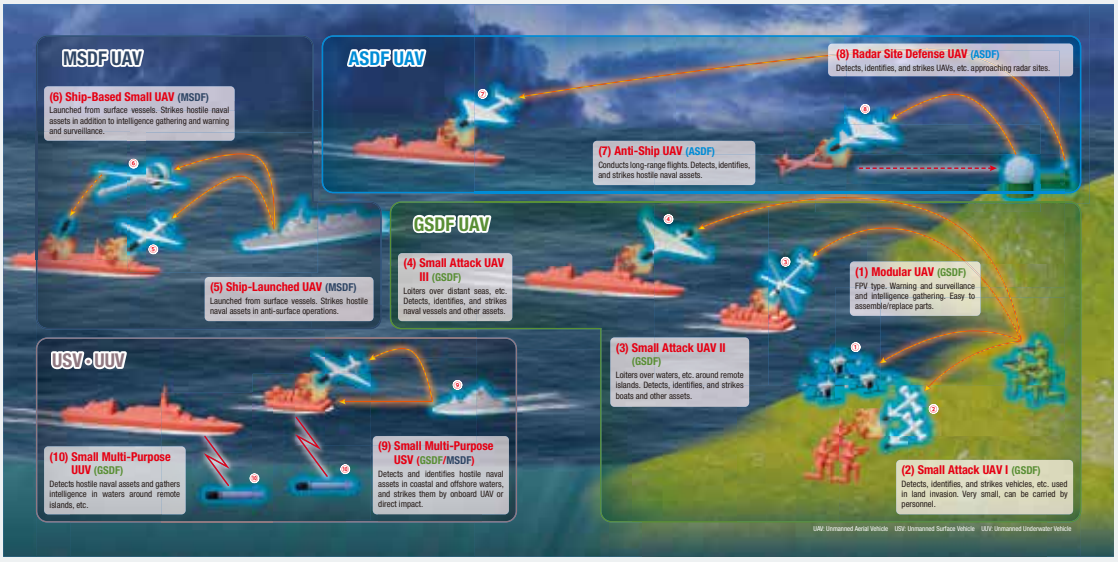
Fundamental Reinforcement of Japan's Defense Capabilities

- 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

Part III

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.



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

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.



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

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.



"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.



The 12th ADMM-Plus (November 2025)

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.



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

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 second Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Project (July 2025)

Part III 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

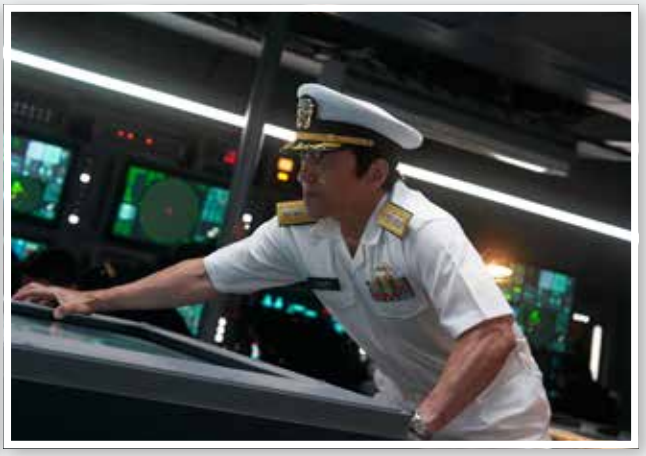
- The MOD/JSDF will address and contribute to resolving climate change and environmental issues. In addition, the MOD/JSDF will promote initiatives that focus more on the coexistence of the JSDF/USFJ facilities/areas with the surrounding areas.
- In July 2025, based on the Plan for Global Warming Countermeasures, 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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Part IV 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.

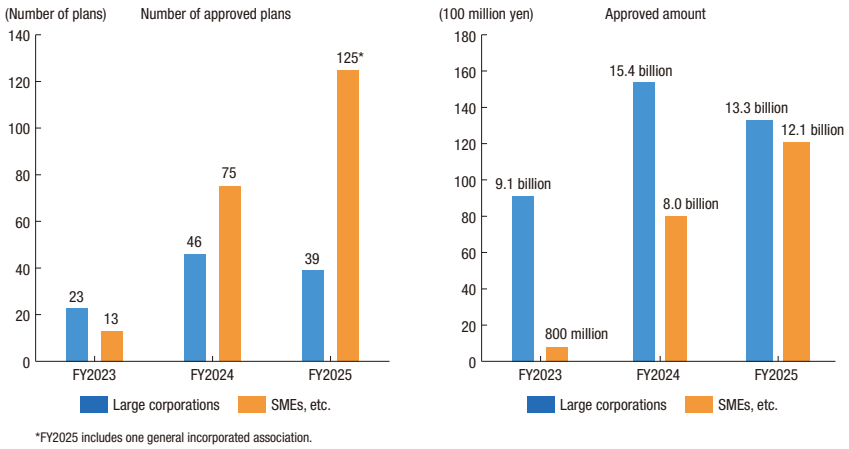
The Environment Surrounding Japan’s Defense Production and Technological Bases

- 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.



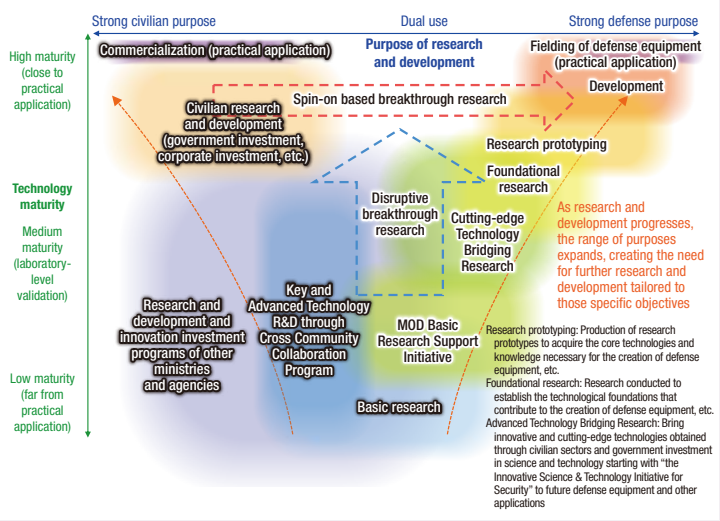
*FY2025 includes one general incorporated association.

Record of Approvals for the Stable Manufacturing Plans

Part IV 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 MOD's Research and Development Initiatives

- 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.

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.

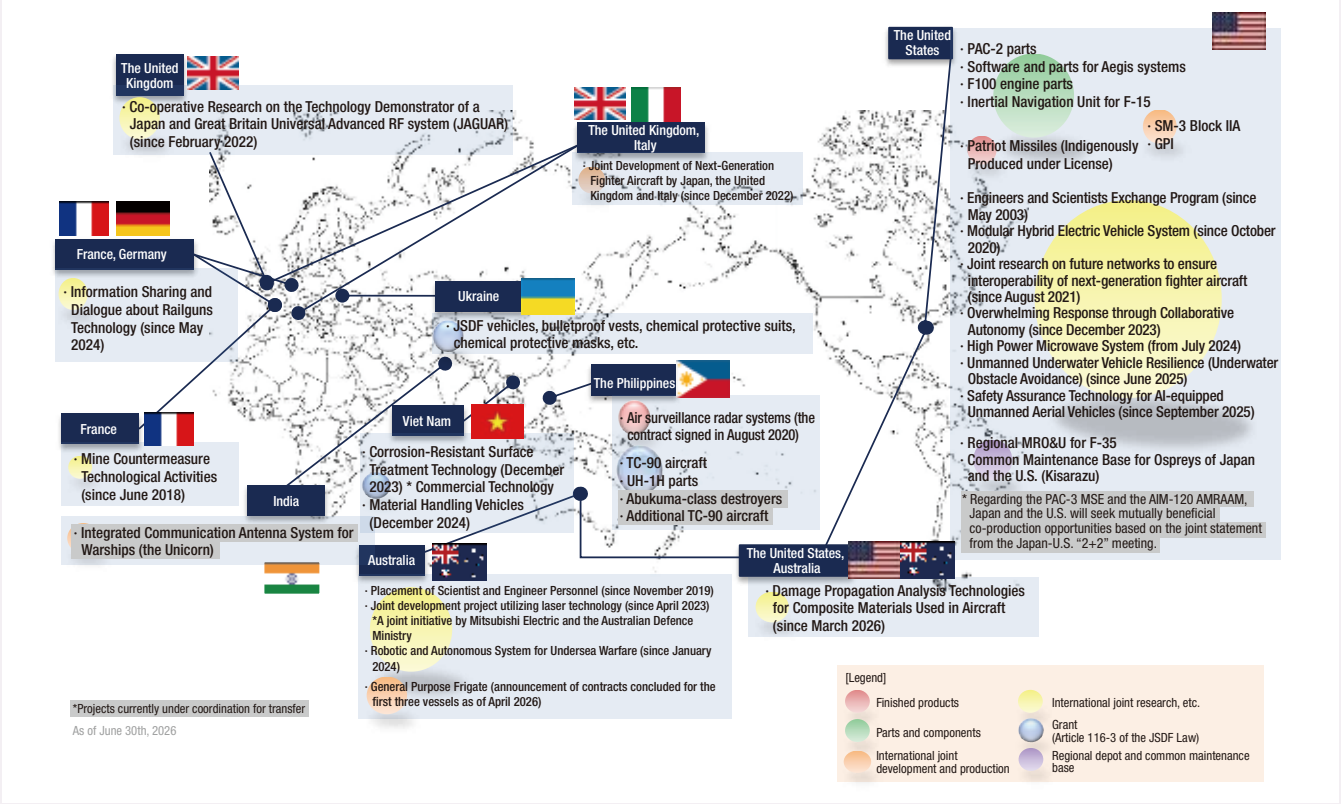
Chapter 3 Promotion of Defense Equipment Transfer and Technology Cooperation

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)

Part IV 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.



Mogami-class frigate

- 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.

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.

Part V Reinforcing the Human Resource Base

Chapter 1 The Professionalism of JSDF Personnel

JSDF Personnel Fulfilling Their Missions across Diverse Duty Stations



Induction ceremony (GSDF)

- 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.

Career Development Support of JSDF Personnel



Personnel retiring due to reaching the mandatory retirement age

- 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.

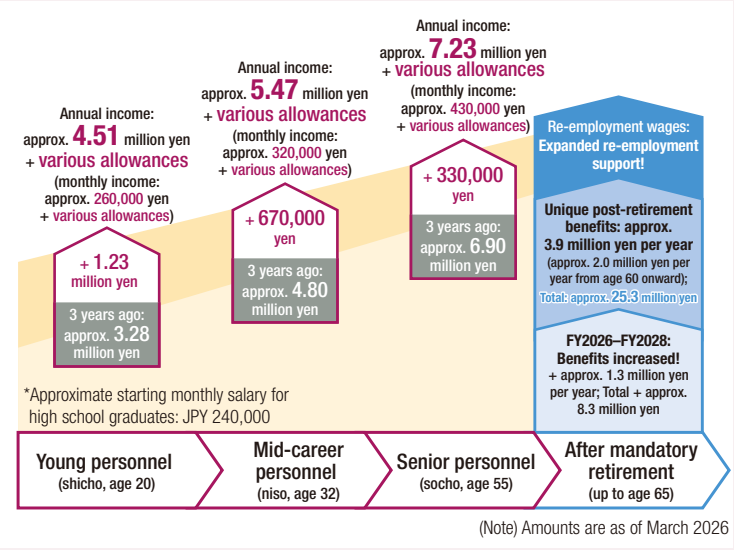
Part V

Reinforcing the Human Resource Base

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.



(Note) Amounts are as of March 2026

- 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 form 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

Part V

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.

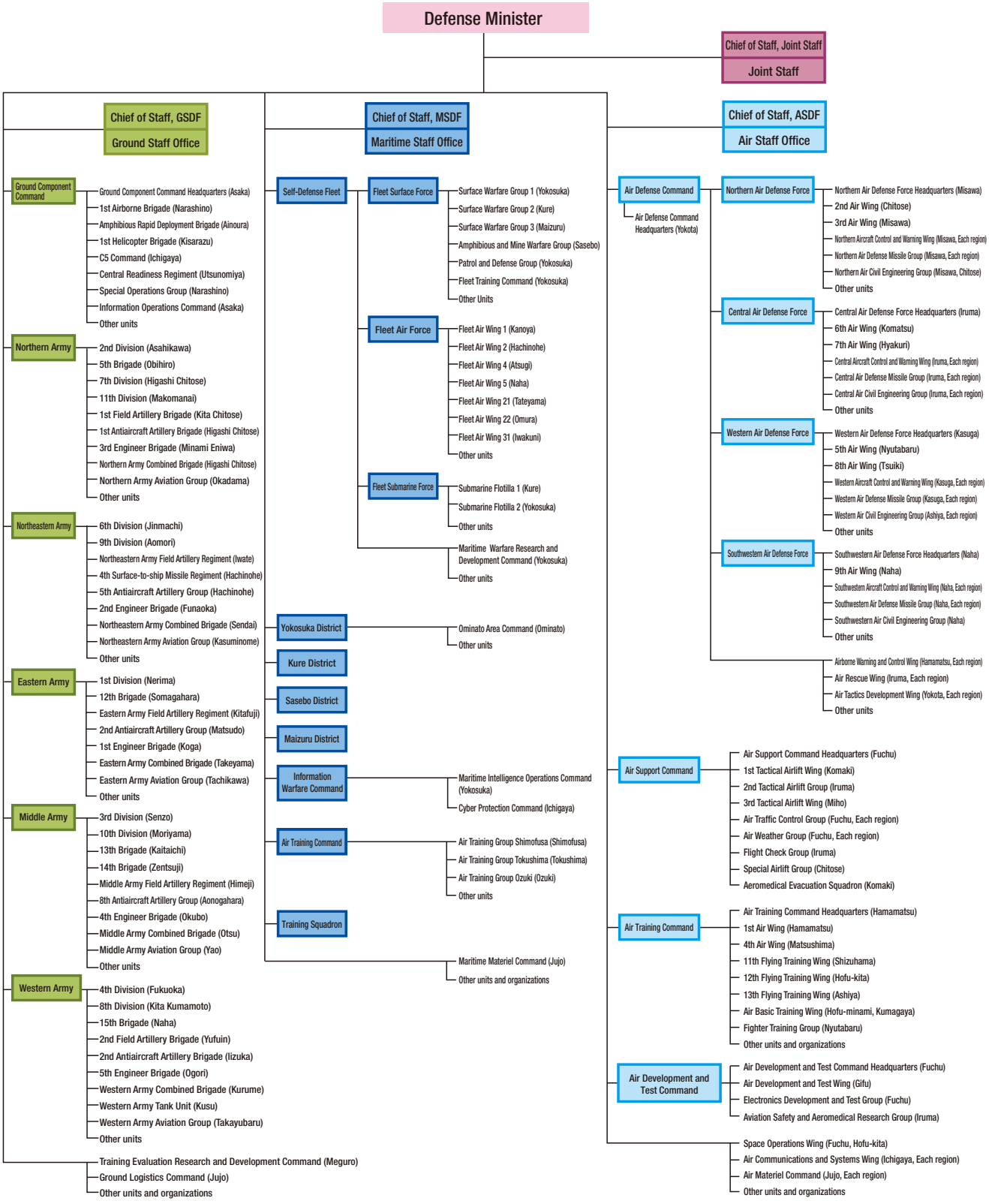


JSDF personnel arriving after dropping their child at a workplace nursery

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).

Organizational Diagram of the Self-Defense Forces



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



Part I

Security Environment Surrounding Japan

Chapter 1 Overview

Chapter 2 Russia's Aggression and Ukraine's Defense

Chapter 3 Defense Policies of Other Countries and Regions

Chapter 4 Trends in New Ways of Warfare

Chapter 1 Overview

1 Global Security Environment

Current trends in the security environment have several features. First, 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 significant challenges to the free and open international order underpinned by the rule of law. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has revealed this in a most blatant way. The international community is facing its greatest post-war trial yet and has entered a new era of crisis. In addition, the global power balance has significantly changed, and interstate competition across the political, economic and military spheres is emerging. The interstate competition between China and the United States in particular is expected to further intensify in various fields.

Second, rapid advances in science and technology are fundamentally changing the paradigm of security. Countries are striving to develop cutting-edge technologies that could dramatically alter the character of warfare and thus prove to become "game changers." The organization of military and the methods and means of warfare are changing.

Third, there exists a range of global security challenges such as increasingly serious risks in cyber and other domains, information warfare, including the spread of disinformation, and climate change.

In addition, **gray zone situations** over territories are constantly occurring. It is highly likely that **hybrid warfare**, combining military and non-military means to achieve military objectives, such as information warfare that utilizes the spread of disinformation prior to an armed attack, will be conducted in an even more sophisticated form in the time ahead.

In cyber, maritime, space, and electromagnetic domains and other areas, the risks that impede free access and utilization of these areas are becoming increasingly serious. In particular, the threat of cyberattacks, in which the risk of exposure is relatively low and where attackers have an advantage, is growing rapidly. Cyberattacks have been used constantly to disable or destroy critical infrastructures, interfere in foreign elections, demand ransoms, and steal sensitive information, even in the form of state-sponsored cyberattacks.

Furthermore, addressing those issues not necessarily deemed as security targets in the past, such as supply chain vulnerabilities, increasing threats to critical infrastructures, and leadership struggles over advanced technologies, has also become a major security challenge. As a result, the scope of security has expanded to include the economic sector, making economic measures even more necessary to ensure security.

KEY WORD **Gray Zone Situations**

So-called "gray zone" situations simply represent a wide range of situations that are neither peacetime nor wartime.
In a gray zone situation, for example, a country that confronts another over territory, sovereignty or maritime and other economic interests uses some forceful organization to demonstrate its presence in the relevant disputed region in a bid to alter the status quo or force other countries to accept its assertions or demands.

KEY WORD **Hybrid Warfare**

The so-called "hybrid warfare" represents methods intentionally blurring the boundaries between the military and non-military realms, forcing affected actors to take complex measures that are not limited to military actions.
The means of hybrid warfare include operations using military units of unidentified nationality, cyberattacks to affect communications and other critical infrastructure, the spread of disinformation through the internet and the media, and other influential operations. The combination of these measures is considered to amount to hybrid warfare. In hybrid warfare, a country takes measures that are difficult to identify definitively as an "armed attack" based on its outward appearance. It is said that such an approach is taken with the intent to make it difficult for the target country to address the situation, such as delaying the military's initial response, while denying the attacker country's own involvement.

2 Security Environment in the Indo-Pacific Region

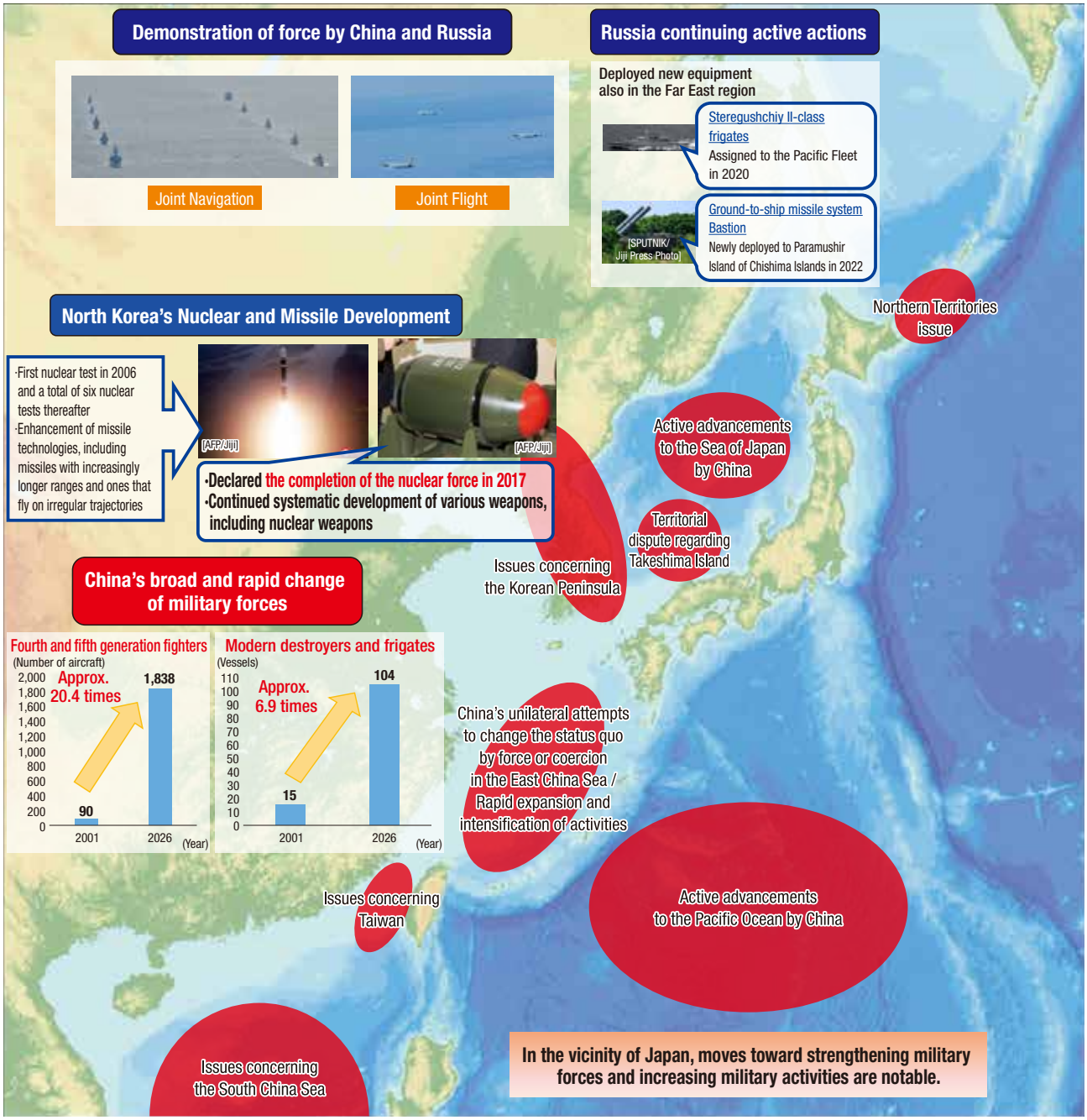
The global security environment and challenges articulated above are particularly prominent in the Indo-Pacific region, where Japan is situated, and may get severer in the future. The Indo-Pacific region is the core of global vitality, home to more than half of the world's population. The dynamism of the intersection of the Pacific and the Indian Oceans is a growth engine for the global economy. Japan, situated in this region, is well positioned to benefit from this.

At the same time, the Indo-Pacific region faces a host of security challenges. For example, several nations and regions that possess large military forces, including nuclear weapons, do not share universal values, nor political and economic systems based on such universal values. Furthermore, there exists a complex intertwining of diplomatic and other relations based on historical backgrounds. In the case of Japan, the territorial issues of the Northern Territories and Takeshima, which are inherent territories of Japan, remain unresolved. In addition, Japan faces threats and challenges of various types and intensities, such as attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion in the East and South China Seas and other areas, piracy, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and natural disasters.

Japan is facing the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has easily breached the very foundation of the rules that shape the international order. The possibility cannot be precluded that a similar serious situation may arise in the future in the Indo-Pacific region, especially in East Asia. Across the globe, historical changes in power balances, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, are occurring.

See Fig. I-1-1 (Regional Security Environment Surrounding Japan); Fig. I-1-2 (Military Strength of Major Countries/Regions (Approximate Numbers)); Fig. I-1-3 (Main Military Forces Surrounding Japan (Approximate Strength))

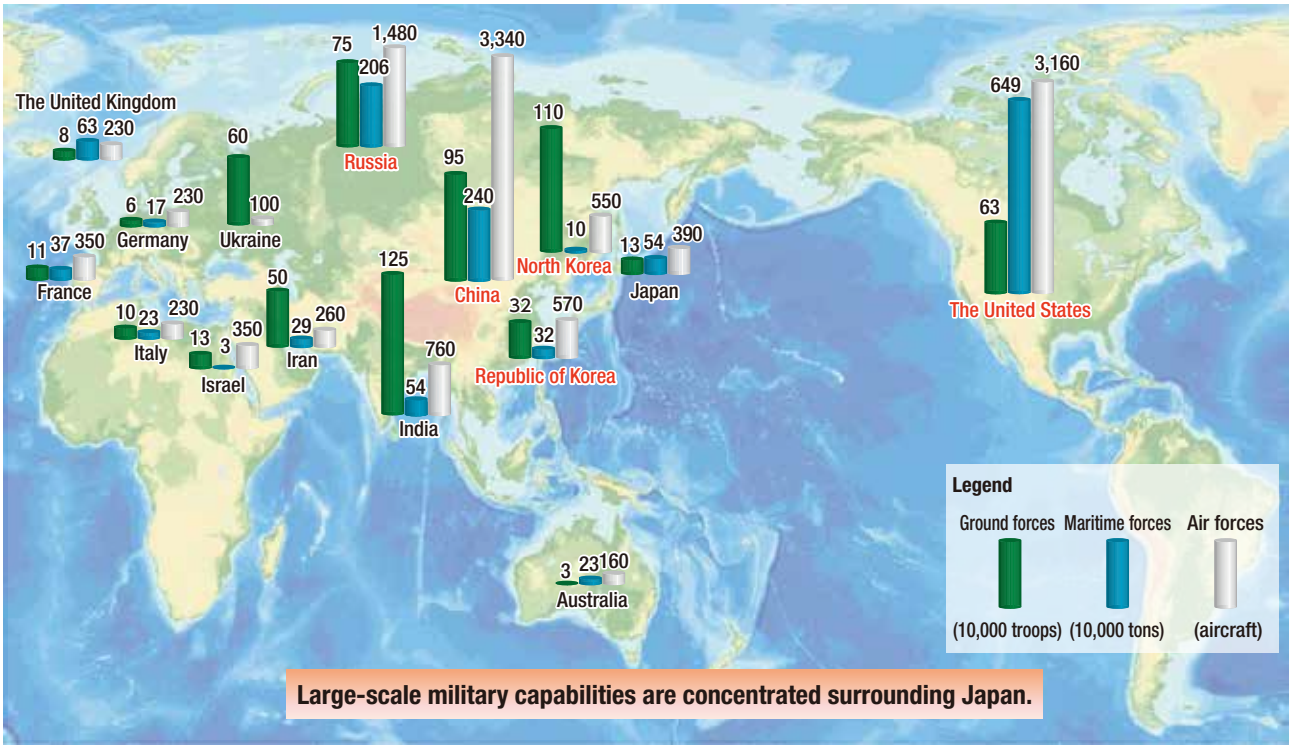
Fig. I-1-1 Regional Security Environment Surrounding Japan



○The Indo-Pacific region has many security challenges.
- There are several nations and regions with large military forces, including nuclear weapons, that do not share universal values, nor the political and economic systems based on such universal values.
- There exists a complex intertwining of diplomatic and other relations based on historical backgrounds.
- Diverse threats and challenges of various types and intensities exist in this region, such as unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and South China Sea and other areas, piracy, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and natural disasters.

(Note) Figures for modern destroyers and frigates for China show the total number of Renhai-class, Luhu-class, Luhai-class, Sovremenny-class, Luyang-class, and Luzhou-class destroyers and Jiangwei-class and Jiangkai-class frigates. Additionally, China has 50 Jiangdao-class corvettes (in 2026).

Fig. I-1-2 Military Strength of Major Countries/Regions (Approximate Numbers)



Ground forces (10,000 troops)		
1	India	125
2	North Korea	110
3	China	95
4	Russia	75
5	United States	63
6	Ukraine	60
7	Pakistan	56
8	Iran	50
9	Viet Nam	38
10	Republic of Korea	32
-	Japan	13

Maritime forces (10,000 tons (vessels))		
1	United States	649 (970)
2	China	240 (700)
3	Russia	206 (1,170)
4	United Kingdom	63 (150)
5	India	54 (330)
6	France	37 (280)
7	Republic Korea	32 (230)
8	Iran	29 (600)
9	Türkiye	27 (230)
10	Indonesia	26 (200)
-	Japan	54 (140)

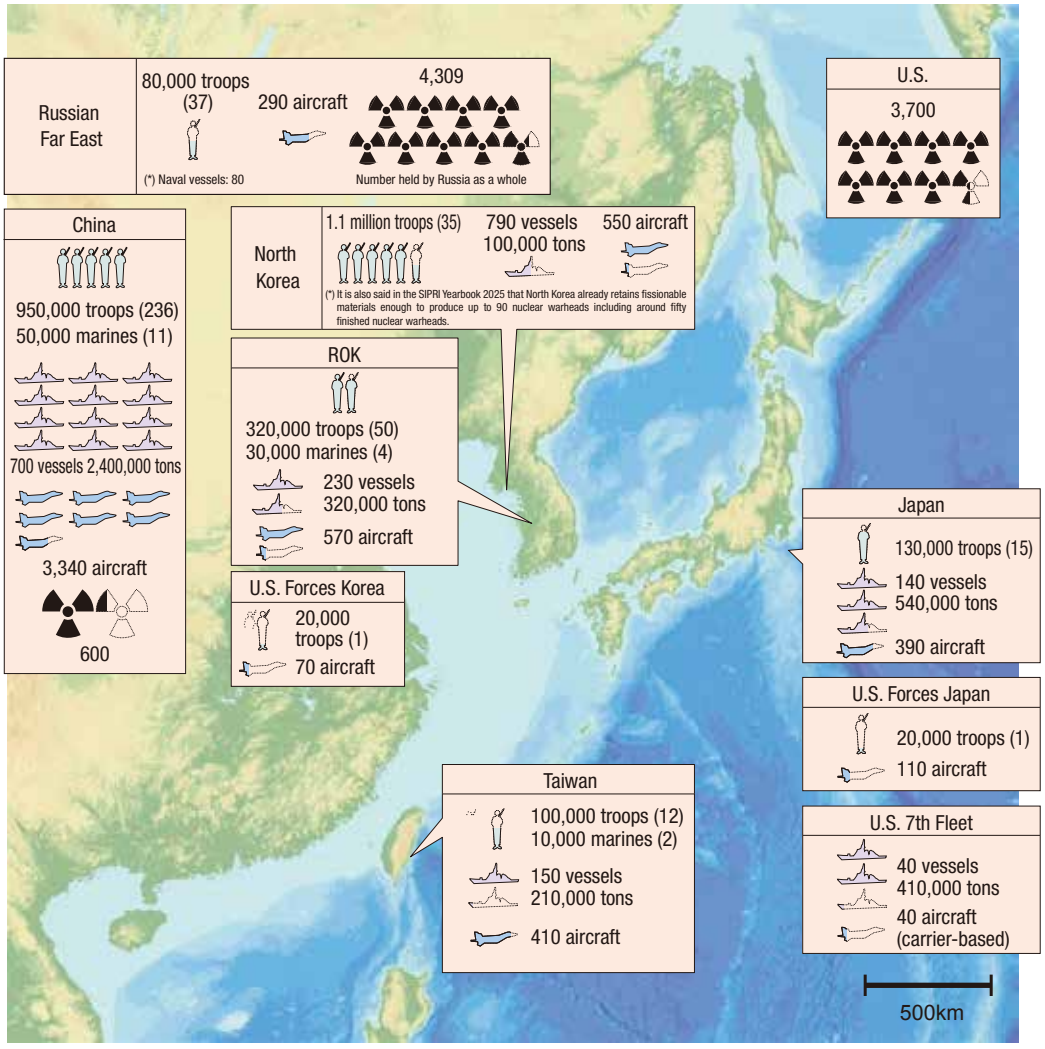
Air forces (aircraft)		
1	China	3,340
2	United States	3,160
3	Russia	1,480
4	India	760
5	Republic of Korea	570
6	North Korea	550
7	Egypt	510
8	Pakistan	470
9	Saudi Arabia	460
10	Taiwan	410
-	Japan	390

(Notes) 1. Figures for ground forces are basically the numbers of Army personnel in "The Military Balance 2026."* Figures for maritime forces show their tonnages compiled by the Ministry of Defense (MOD) based on "Jane's Fighting Ships 2025-2026." Figures for air forces are the total numbers of bombers, fighters, attack aircraft, surveillance aircraft, etc., compiled by the MOD based on "The Military Balance 2026."

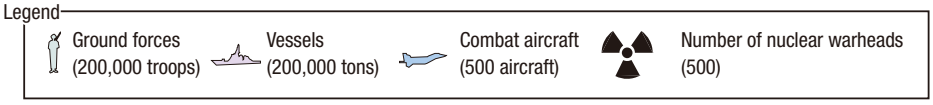
2. Figures for Japan indicate the strength of each Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) service as of the end of FY2025; the number of combat aircraft (air forces) is the sum of the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) aircraft (excluding transport aircraft) and the MSDF aircraft (fixed-wing aircraft only).

* Figures are rounded off to the nearest 10,000 personnel. Figures for the United States include 450,000 Army personnel and 170,000 Marines personnel. Russia's figures include 680,000 Ground Forces personnel, as well as 35,000 Airborne Forces personnel and 30,000 troops from the "separatist forces" in eastern Ukraine that Russia announced it had "integrated" into its armed forces. Ukraine's figures include 450,000 Land Forces personnel, 45,000 Airborne Forces personnel, 5,000 Special Operations Forces personnel, 80,000 Territorial Defence Forces personnel, and 20,000 Unmanned Systems Forces personnel. Iran's figures include 350,000 Army personnel and 190,000 ground force personnel of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Fig. I-1-3 Main Military Forces Surrounding Japan (Approximate Strength)



(Notes) 1 Source: Documents published by the DoD, "The Military Balance 2026" and "SIPRI Yearbook 2025," etc.
2 Figures for Japan indicate the strength of each JSDF service as of the end of FY2025; the number of combat aircraft is the sum of the ASDF aircraft(excluding transport aircraft) and the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) aircraft (fixed-wing aircraft only).
3 Figures for the ground forces of U.S. Forces Japan/Korea indicate the combined total for Army troops and U.S. Marines.
4 Figures for combat aircraft include naval and marine aircraft.
5 Figures in parentheses indicate the total number of major units such as divisions and brigades. That for North Korea includes only divisions.
6 The figures for the U.S. 7th Fleet indicate forces forward-deployed to Japan and Guam.
7 The figures for the combat aircraft of U.S. Forces Japan and the U.S. 7th Fleet include only fighter aircraft.



Commentary

The Impact on Japan of the Links among the Security Environments of Each Region

The Indo-Pacific is a region in which a complex mix of continents, peninsulas, and islands are located within a vast geographical area. Japan is not in an environment in which it is connected to other countries primarily by land borders as are China, Russia, the Korean Peninsula, and Europe, but taking into account cases such as Russia's aggression against Ukraine, we cannot deny the possibility that even regions far away across the ocean could have an impact on Japan's security.

Generally speaking, as cross-border economic activities and flows of people grow, events occurring in geographically distant regions begin to have an impact on other regions through the transactions and flows of people among regions. In the military sphere, these kinds of links are being seen in the form of the transfer of military equipment and military technologies among regions, the stationing of units in other countries, and the dispatch of personnel and military assets to other countries, among other developments. There is a possibility that these activities could have an impact on the military balance and the military activities in the region.

It is believed that the aggression against Ukraine shows the military links between Europe and the Indo-Pacific. One notable example of this is the progress in Russia-North Korea military cooperation. It has become clear that Russia-North Korea military cooperation is progressing in the form of the procurement of weapons and ammunition made in North Korea, including ballistic missiles, in the aggression against Ukraine and their use against Ukraine, as well as the dispatch of North Korean soldiers to Russia. In addition, there is a risk that nuclear and missile-related technologies could be transferred to North Korea by Russia, and the possibility that this could have an impact on the military balance in the Indo-Pacific region in the medium to long term has not been denied.

In this way, events in one region can have a multilayered impact on the security environments of other regions. Therefore, as its neighboring countries and others increase their military forces and intensify their military activities, it is necessary for Japan, which is located in the Indo-Pacific, to be aware of the links among the security environments of each region and closely monitor their developments.

Commentary

The Rising Threat of Missiles in the Area around Japan

There are several countries and regions surrounding Japan that have large-scale military forces, including nuclear weapons, and missile forces that can serve as a means of delivering nuclear weapons have increased significantly in both quality and quantity, so missile attacks on Japan are a real threat.

It has been noted that countries and regions in the vicinity of Japan possess missiles capable of attacking other nations in quantities already numbering in the thousands, and that they are further increasing these quantities. For example, it has been reported that for weapons with a range of 300 km or above, China currently possesses over 3,000 ground-launched missiles alone, along with a current cache of 1,000 land attack cruise missiles, a number that is expected to rise to 5,000 by 2035. In addition, it is estimated that North Korea currently possesses 700 to 1,000 ballistic missiles in total. Russia also possesses a variety of different missiles, including about 350 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and it is believed to have launched over 13,000 missile attacks during its aggression against Ukraine.

Moreover, the increase in missile forces is also being seen in the form of development of hypersonic weapons, enhancement of precision strike capability, and increase and diversification of launch platforms, among other developments. In particular, hypersonic weapons fly at lower altitudes than normal ballistic missiles, thus delaying detection. It is considered that their great maneuvering capabilities make it difficult to predict their trajectories and impact points, making their interception more difficult.

For example, it has been pointed out that in 2020 China began operating DF-17s, which are said to be medium-range ballistic missiles, as ballistic missiles capable of carrying Hypersonic Glide Vehicles (HGVs), and it has been pointed out that China may have deployed DF-27s, which are said to be long-range ballistic missiles, as well. North Korea has been repeatedly launching missiles it calls "hypersonic missiles." Russia is also proceeding with the deployment of the HGV "Avangard" and the Hypersonic Cruise Missile (HCM) "Zircon" and is using the "Zircon" against Ukraine.

The Ministry of Defense (MOD) is working to ceaselessly strengthen the quality and quantity of Japan's missile defense capabilities. However, it is believed that it will become increasingly difficult to fully respond to this threat with the existing missile defense network alone, particularly if Japan continues to rely solely on the means of missile defense. Therefore, in the event of a missile attack by an adversary, Japan will use its missile defense network to intercept incoming missiles while preventing further armed attacks from the adversary through counterstrike capabilities as an absolute minimum self-defense measure that is unavoidably necessary in cases where it is recognized that no other means are available. Through these initiatives, the MOD hopes to deter the occurrence itself of armed attacks by enhancing Japan's deterrence and response capabilities.

Chapter 2

Russia's Aggression and Ukraine's Defense

1 General Situation

Russia's aggression against Ukraine undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. It is a serious violation of international law, including the United Nations Charter, which prohibits the use of force. Such unilateral changes to the status quo by force have shaken the very foundation of the international order, including in Asia. In addition, brutal and inhumane acts committed by Russia have been revealed throughout Ukraine. The murder of numerous innocent civilians is a grave violation of international humanitarian law (IHL) and a war crime, and utterly unforgivable.

After the end of World War II, denial of unilateral changes to the status quo by force became one of the foundations of international order. But, Russia, a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which is supposed to take primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, is now openly taking military actions challenging international law and the international order, claiming innocent lives, and repeatedly issuing statements implying the use of nuclear weapons. This is an unprecedented situation. If such Russian aggression is tolerated, it could send a message with the wrong implication that unilateral changes to the status quo by force are acceptable in other regions as well, including Asia. Therefore, the international community, including Japan, should not tolerate Russia's action.

The international community works together in solidarity against Russia's aggression by imposing sanctions against Russia and continuing to provide Ukraine with equipment such as tanks, artillery, and ammunition in order to support Ukraine's efforts to defend itself and eject the Russian military from Ukraine. The future developments surrounding Russia's aggression against Ukraine remain unpredictable. Japan needs to monitor the related situation closely with grave concern.

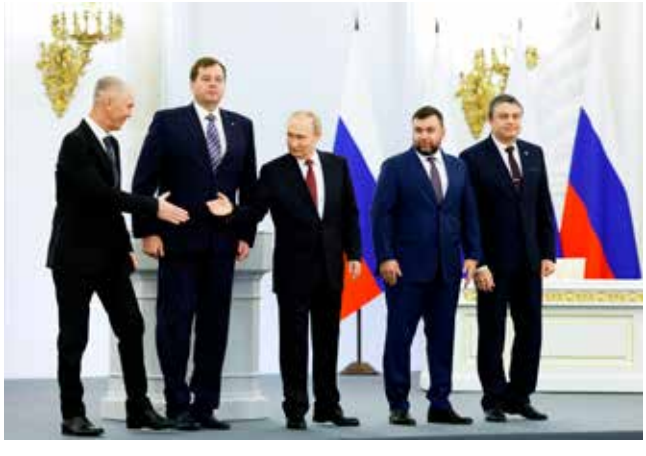
2 Russia's Aggression against Ukraine and the Future Outlook

1 The Failure of Russia's Blitzkrieg and Ukraine's Successful Defense

On February 24, 2022, Russia started full-scale aggression against Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed the clear intention to remain in Kyiv from the early stage of the aggression, and the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) and other military and para-military units obstructed the advance of the main units of the Armed Forces of Russian Federation (AFRF) in the suburbs of the capital, which caused heavy losses for AFRF, which intended to take control of the city within a short time period. It is pointed out that Russia's goal to eliminate the Zelenskyy administration failed after the AFU fought off the AFRF in the Kyiv direction in the end of March through the early April.

The AFU successfully defended Kharkiv in northeastern Ukraine, the country's second-largest city and a major transportation hub. Meanwhile, the Russian forces made territorial gains in southern Ukraine more quickly than in other areas. The AFRF occupied Kherson, the capital city of Kherson oblast on the west bank of the Dnipro River, in early March 2022, and temporarily advanced further west in the direction of Mykolayiv, the capital city of Mykolayiv oblast. The AFRF made significant territorial gains in southern Zaporizhzhia oblast and southern Donetsk oblast, on the northern coast of the Sea of Azov, at the start of Russia's aggression.

See Fig. I-2-1 (Map of Ukraine)



President Putin (center) and the "heads" and "governors" of the eastern and southern four regions of Ukraine, at the ceremony for "annexing" the regions (oblasts) (September 2022) [EPA-Jiji]

Fig. I-2-1 Map of Ukraine



2 Redeployment of Russian Forces and Start of Ukrainian Counteroffensive

(1) Redeployment of Troops and Territorial Expansion in Eastern and Southern Ukraine

The AFRF, which failed to take control of the capital Kyiv, on March 25, 2022, announced that previous military action had been "the first phase of operation" and that the primary goal of its operation would shift to gaining territories in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in eastern Ukraine.

After withdrawing its forces from the Kyiv area and regrouping, the AFRF seized Sievierodonetsk, the temporary capital city of Luhansk oblast, and its surroundings from late June to early July 2022.

The AFRF concentrated its forces on seizing the Azovstal Iron and Steel Works (AISW) in Mariupol, Ukraine's last stronghold in the south of Donetsk oblast on the coast of the Sea of Azov. In May 2022, the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that the AFRF completed the operation in Mariupol.

As a result of the seizure of Mariupol, Russia secured the whole coast of the Sea of Azov and the land bridge connecting to the Crimean Peninsula.

(2) Start of Ukrainian Counteroffensive

The AFU continued fierce resistance against the AFRF along the entire front line as well as intensified its attacks on Russian positions from April 2022, which seemed to prepare for the future counteroffensive.

The AFU sank the Slava-class guided missile cruiser "Moskva," the flagship of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Navy, with a "Neptune," a domestically produced surface-to-ship cruise missile, in April 2022 in southern Ukraine. In June 2022, General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, then Commander-in-Chief of the AFU, announced that the AFU had attacked AFRF units on Zmiinyi (Snake) Island in the Black Sea, which was

occupied in the early stages of the war and forced them to withdraw from the island.

These Ukrainian attacks degraded the Russian air defense network that had been provided by the vessels of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in southern Ukraine, which made it difficult for Russian air forces to conduct operations in the area. As a result, it was easier for Ukraine to launch a counteroffensive in the region.

The AFU used the M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) supplied by the United States, in action from late June 2022. In July 2022, the AFU stated that they had started a counteroffensive in the south. The Ukrainian military attacked Russian command posts and logistics bases using a long-range precision strike weapons system such as HIMARS, and interdicted bridges and other crossing sites over the Dnipro River. Difficulties in logistics caused by these attacks decreased fighting capabilities and morale of Russian troops in the north of the river and improved conditions for the Ukrainian counteroffensive.



The Ukrainian military's High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) being launched (Kherson oblast, southern Ukraine) [EPA-Jiji]

3 Ukrainian Counteroffensive on the Kharkiv and Kherson Fronts in 2022 and Russia's Response

(1) Full-fledged Ukraine Counteroffensive

In early September 2022, the Ukrainian military conducted a successful counteroffensive in Kharkiv oblast in northeastern Ukraine, and regained most of the Russian-occupied area in the oblast. It is probable that the AFU strived to conceal its plan for the counteroffensive in the northeast, unlike in the south where the counteroffensive was conspicuous. It is also pointed out that the vulnerability of the Russian forces in the northeast as a result of the redeployment of Russia's troops from the east to the south to prepare against Ukraine's southern counteroffensive was a factor in the AFU's successful counteroffensive.

On the other hand, in the south, as a result of efforts to cut off and undermine each AFRF unit using the Dnipro River, the AFU forced Russian troops to withdraw and successfully regained the northern part of the Dnipro of Kherson oblast including Kherson, the capital city of the oblast, in mid-November of 2022.

(2) Russia's Response

Russia responded in various ways to Ukraine's full-fledged counteroffensive, such as with troop buildups and making its occupation of Ukrainian territory a fait accompli.

With respect to the buildup of forces, President Vladimir Putin signed executive orders related to partial mobilization in September 2022. Regarding the mobilization, then Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that he was planning to mobilize some 300,000 reservists.

Regarding Russia's fait accompli of the occupied areas in Ukraine, Russia illegally "annexed" four regions of the occupied areas in the oblasts of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson based on the results of a "referendum" conducted in the area in September to ask the people whether their territory was to be "annexed" to Russia or not.

In addition, the AFRF has built multi-layered defenses, including trenches, anti-tank ditches, concrete anti-tank obstacles known as "Dragon's Teeth" and minefields along the entire contact line in anticipation of counterattacks by the AFU. At the same time, the AFRF has intensified bombardments with missiles and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) loitering munitions all over Ukraine. This was apparently aimed at depleting Ukraine's air defense missile reserves and weakening Ukraine's sustained operational capability (SOC) and will to fight by damaging power grids critical for civilian life in winter and increasing civilian casualties. While the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) estimates the number of noncombatant victims caused by the Russian attack in Ukraine amount to be over 15,000 as of January 2026, the actual number is possibly much higher as accurate numbers cannot be determined due to the ongoing fighting, and the number is still increasing now.

In January 2023, the Russian military and the private military company (PMC) "Wagner" intensified their offensive in the eastern Donetsk oblast. In May 2023, they seemed to have taken control of Bakhmut, a key transportation hub in the oblast.

4 Stagnation of Ukrainian Counteroffensive on the Zaporizhzhia Front in 2023 and Russian Eastern Offensive

(1) Provision of Western Weapons to Ukraine and Stagnation of the Ukrainian Counteroffensive

While thrown on the defensive in the face of the offensive on the Bakhmut front by the Russian military and other forces, the Ukrainian military received various equipment from Western countries, including main battle tanks such as the "Leopard 2A6" and "Challenger 2" and air-launched long-

range cruise missiles such as the "Storm Shadow." It seems to have been preparing a counteroffensive by reorganizing its new units and training its soldiers in Europe.

The Ukrainian military is believed to have launched a counteroffensive in early June 2023 and sequentially recaptured multiple villages, centering on the front of southern Zaporizhzhia oblast. However, the Ukrainian military is also said to have suffered significant losses in personnel and equipment as its advance was blocked by numerous antipersonnel mines and anti-tank mines laid by Russian forces and anti-tank missiles from attack helicopters.

The Ukrainian military's counteroffensive seemed to be aimed at breaking through the Russian military's defensive line in the southern Zaporizhzhia oblast to advance southward down to the Sea of Azov, thereby cutting off the Russian military's land logistics route connecting mainland Russia and the Crimean Peninsula. However, it appears that the original goals were not achieved.

Ukraine seemed to be lacking in firepower, short-range air defense system to cover advancing units, mine-clearing equipment and trained manpower. These shortages likely brought the counteroffensive to a halt.

In October 2023, the United States provided Ukraine with the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS), a surface-to-surface ballistic missile system. However, no major breakthrough was achieved in ground operations. In November 2023, President Zelenskyy ordered the construction of defensive positions in preparation for a Russian military offensive, and the Ukrainian military was on the defensive.

(2) Intensifying Russian Military Offensives and Missile Attacks in Eastern Ukraine

Russian forces allegedly intensified their offensive on the Avdiivka and Bakhmut fronts in Donetsk oblast and the Kupiansk front in Kharkiv oblast from October 2023. In February 2024, the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that Russia had taken control of Avdiivka.

In addition, since late December 2023, the Russian military has intensified its missile attacks across Ukraine. While the missile attacks in the winter of 2022 targeted power grids, some observers have pointed out that the targets of the missile attacks in the winter of 2023 were military industries, with an eye on a protracted war. This trend continued into the spring of 2024, while a shortage of air defense equipment led to exacerbating damage to Ukraine.



A Ukrainian thermal power plant severely damaged by Russian missile and drone attacks (February 2026) [AFP-Jiji]

5 Ongoing Eastern Offensives and the Kharkiv Offensive by Russia, and Cross-border Attacks into Russia by Ukraine in 2024

(1) Ongoing Eastern Offensives and the Start of the Kharkiv Offensive by the AFRF

As the AFU faced a shortage of artillery, shells, air-defense missiles, and other supplies, the AFRF, after taking control of Avdiivka, continued with its offensives to the west toward Pokrovsk, a key transportation hub. From April 2024, the AFRF also strengthened its offensive operations against Chasiv Yar, which is located in the highlands of the Bakhmut front.

At the same time, although support from the United States had stagnated since December 2023 due to delays in approving the budget, the Ukraine Security Supplemental Appropriations Act was enacted at the end of April 2024. The resumption of support seemed to mitigate Ukraine's shortage of air-defense missiles and reduce the artillery-firepower gap.

In May 2024, the AFRF launched an offensive against Kharkiv oblast. Although it was able to seize many villages on that front within about a week, the situation on the Kharkiv front appears to have reached a stalemate. It has been pointed out that the purpose of the offensive was to establish a buffer zone to prevent cross-border attacks into the Russian territory and to divert the Ukrainian forces away from eastern Ukraine, the main fronts of attacks.

(2) Cross-border Attacks into Russia by the AFU and Territorial Gains in Eastern Ukraine by the AFRF

Around June 2024, in response to Russia's offensive against Kharkiv, the United States, the United Kingdom and certain European countries gave Ukraine the permission to attack Russian territory near the border using weapons provided by them except long-range missiles.

In early August 2024, the AFU launched a cross-border attack on the Russian oblast of Kursk, which is adjacent to the border of northeastern Ukraine, and secured territory around Sudzha in the oblast. In terms of the meaning of this cross-border attack, in February 2025, President Zelenskyy proposed a plan to exchange the occupied Kursk oblast area for territory held by Russia if Russia commences negotiations.

Meanwhile, the Russian military continued its offensive against eastern Ukraine beyond August 2024, while responding to cross-border attacks into Kursk oblast.

They steadily gained territory, particularly in the direction of Pokrovsk and further south toward the Kurakhove area. In December 2024, the AFRF reached the vicinity of Pokrovsk, and, in January 2025, the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that it had taken control of Kurakhove.

Since late August 2024, the Ukrainian military is believed to have been striving to hold on to the occupied areas in the Kursk oblast. However, at the end of April 2025, Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov reported to President Putin that the entire oblast had been recaptured. He also stated that North Korean soldiers participated in the recapture of the area. Meanwhile, on the same day, the General Staff of the AFU declared that Ukrainian forces were continuing defensive operations in Kursk.

6 Continuation of Russia's Eastern Offensive in 2025 and Expansion of Operations to the South

Around May 2025, the AFRF continued their offensive toward Pokrovsk in Donetsk oblast while also conducting attacks against Ukraine's Sumy oblast, which borders Russia's Kursk oblast. On May 2, the Russian Ministry of Defence also stated that efforts to establish a "security zone" in the border areas of Sumy oblast were ongoing. On the other hand, in June, General Oleksandr Syrskyi, Commander-in-Chief of the AFU, stated that the Russian offensive in the border areas of Sumy oblast had been halted and that the front line had stabilized, suggesting that the fighting there had reached a stalemate.

During this period, while there were no major changes along the Pokrovsk front, the AFRF units operating south of Pokrovsk continued to advance gradually toward Dnipropetrovsk oblast, located west of Donetsk oblast, and are believed to have begun attacks into Dnipropetrovsk oblast in July 2025.

Beginning around September of the same year, observers began pointing out that Russia noticeably advanced toward the Hulyaipole direction in Zaporizhzhia oblast farther to the south, and in November Commander-in-Chief Syrskyi stated that the situation in that sector had deteriorated significantly.

Furthermore, regarding the Pokrovsk front, at the end of October 2025, the General Staff of the AFU stated that the AFRF had concentrated approximately 200 troops inside Pokrovsk City by infiltrating small infantry units through gaps between AFU defensive positions. It has been pointed out that, as the infiltrating Russian soldiers spread out in all directions, Ukrainian defenses began to collapse, and the situation within the city reportedly deteriorated rapidly. As of March 2026, the city is believed to be under Russian occupation.

In addition, regarding the Siversk direction in Donetsk oblast, in December 2025 the commander of the Russian unit responsible for that sector informed President Putin that the AFRF had captured the city of Siversk, thereby creating conditions for an advance toward Sloviansk, a strategic hub located west of Siversk. Russian offensives against Sloviansk are currently ongoing.

Meanwhile, in the Kupiansk direction in Kharkiv oblast, the city was subjected to Russian attacks for a period of time, with Andrii Besedin, head of the Kupiansk City Military Administration, stating at the end of September 2025 that Russian forces were present within the city. However, in mid-December, Commander-in-Chief Syrskyi announced that the AFU had succeeded in repelling Russian troops and had regained control of approximately 90% of the city.

During the same year, Russian forces also continued missile and UAV attacks across Ukraine. In particular, the number of long-range UAVs flying into Ukraine increased substantially from around May onward, placing a growing burden on Ukraine's air defense network. In addition, in January 2026, in retaliation for what Russia claimed was a Ukrainian UAV attack on the Russian presidential residence at the end of December 2025, the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that it had conducted a large-scale strike against Ukrainian UAV production facilities and energy infrastructure using long-range precision-guided weapons and UAVs, including the new "Oreshnik" intermediate-range ballistic missile. The Russian Ministry of Defence further stated that the attack had rendered an aircraft repair facility in Lviv oblast in western Ukraine inoperable. Furthermore, the AFRF continued attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure during the winter period from 2025 into 2026, and in January 2026 President Zelenskyy stated that power outages had occurred across 60% of Kyiv City. In addition, the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that it had also used the Oreshnik missile in an attack on Ukraine in May 2026.

At the same time, Ukraine has been conducting attacks against Russian territory, primarily using long-range UAVs, with the aim of degrading Russian offensive capabilities among other objectives.



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

7 Russia's Attack on Nuclear Power Stations and Nuclear Facilities and the Situation Surrounding Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Weapons

Russia repeatedly takes dangerous actions around nuclear facilities in the ongoing aggression against Ukraine. Russia occupied the Chornobyl nuclear power plant near the Belarusian border in February 2022 and also occupied the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southeastern Ukraine in March 2022. In addition, Russia attacked the Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology (KIPT), which has experimental reactors and handles nuclear substances, multiple times in and after March.

Regarding nuclear weapons, in September 2022, President Putin stated that Russia would use every possible means to repel threats to the territorial integrity of the nation, including nuclear capabilities. Furthermore, in May 2024, the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that it would conduct exercises to test non-strategic nuclear forces for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union in response to provocative statements and threats from Western officials. In November 2024, it was reported that Western countries had given their permission to utilize long-range missiles provided by them in attacks against Russian territory, and Ukraine used the ATACMS to launch an attack against Russian territory for the first time. On the day of this attack, Russia announced a revised version of a policy document they had previously indicated, Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence, which is equivalent to its so-called nuclear doctrine. Two days later, as a countermeasure in response to the attack on Russian territory using long-range weapons supplied by Western countries, President Putin announced that Russia had attacked the Ukrainian city of Dnipro by using the new "Oreshnik" type of intermediate-range ballistic missile, an attack he called a test. In this way, with nuclear weapons clearly in mind, Russia has repeated behavior and statements which can be interpreted as nuclear blackmail.

Russia has repeatedly claimed that Ukraine may use chemical and biological weapons, while the United States and the United Kingdom assesses that Russia's claim is a preparation for the so-called "false flag campaign."[1] In May 2024, the U.S. Department of State stated that Russia had used chemical weapons. In November of 2024 as well as February and June of 2025, the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) confirmed that riot control agents were contained in hand grenades and soil samples collected from the battlefield in Ukraine. The use of these agents as a method of warfare is prohibited under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).



Debris of the "Oreshnik" released by the Security Service of Ukraine [AFP-Jiji Press]

8 Future Outlook

While it is difficult to predict the future trajectory of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, there are many indications about aspects such as the strategy, tactics, and SOC—in terms of both personnel and materiel—of both the AFRF and the AFU, which may impact future developments.

It has been pointed out that, at the start of the aggression, the AFRF allocated the chain of command and assigned troops of a Joint Strategic Command (Military District) to each operational front as it is in peacetime and thus did not have a centralized command chain covering the entire projected force[2] consisting of 200,000-strong mechanized infantry forces and missile units belonging to the Army, Navy, or Air Force. In early April 2022, a Joint Task Force Commander was reportedly appointed to command all actions of the AFRF. This is seen as a measure to improve cooperation among services and theaters. Also, in January 2023, Russia announced that General Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the AFRF, was named as the Joint Task Force Commander, aiming to improve cooperation among services, the quality of logistics support and command efficiency of the units. In May of 2023, Yevgeny Prigozhin's private military company "Wagner"

1 An operation to create the appearance of receiving political or military attack for the purpose of denouncing the enemy or enhancing the legitimacy of one's own country

2 In addition to the AFRF, paramilitary forces including the following are participating in the aggression: the National Guard of the Russian Federation (former Internal Troops of Russia), the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, and a troop called "Kadyrovites" under the control of the Head of the Chechen Republic Kadyrov.

contributed to the capture of Bakhmut in the eastern Donetsk oblast by deploying numerous troops. However, subsequent discord between the military and Wagner led to Prigozhin instigating an "armed rebellion" in June 2023. In an effort to prevent the recurrence of such an armed uprising, Russia's Defence Ministry has been encouraging former "Wagner" soldiers to sign contracts with the military. It has also been pointed out that the Ministry is trying to centralize the chain of command by managing other private military companies under the control of the General Staff Office.

The AFU continues fighting today undauntedly against the AFRF which has superior quality and larger numbers. Continuation of fighting is made possible by several factors such as a number of reservists with combat experience derived from the eastern front campaign since 2014, significant progress in training non-commissioned officers who assume leading roles in battle realized with the reorganization of the Defense Ministry and the AFU aiming to achieve the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) standard and the introduction of rapid and highly accurate fire coordination systems based on commercial off-the-shelf technologies including the command and control support software "GIS Arta" and situational awareness system "Delta."

In terms of human SOC, it is pointed out that the number of casualties was about 500,000 to 600,000 for the AFU and around 1.2 million for the AFRF as of January 2026.[3] As a result of the fighting dragging on, it seems that both Russia and Ukraine are facing an increasingly serious shortage of personnels. In June 2023, President Putin signed a law allowing prisoners and suspects, excluding felons, to sign military service contracts. In October 2023, the military personnel registration regulations were revised to include a new provision for "special military personnel registration," which has facilitated the enlistment of prisoners without requiring a physical examination. Such measures have created an environment for deploying prisoners more quickly in actual combat operations. In addition, in July 2024, President Putin signed an executive order to approximately double the enlistment bonus paid by the federal government to newly contracted military personnel. In November of the same year, he signed a federal law stipulating partial debt relief for newly contracted military personnel and others. This seems to be part of the government's efforts to secure manpower by increasing the number of contracted military personnel. On the other hand, although Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev stated in January 2026 that approximately 420,000 people had become contracted military personnel in 2025, this represented a decrease from approximately 450,000 in 2024.

Meanwhile, in Ukraine, although President Zelenskyy signed legislation in April 2024 lowering the minimum mobilization age from 27 to 25, Commander-in-Chief Syrskyi stated in January 2025 that such mobilization alone was not enough to satisfy the needs of the front line, and that Ukraine was taking personnel reduction measures within reasonable limits in logistics, support, and servicing components. He also stated that it was necessary to transfer personnel from other divisions to infantry, and mentioned that approximately 70,000 personnel had been reassigned to combat units in February 2025. Ukraine also faces problems that include the desertion of soldiers. In November 2024, President Zelenskyy signed a law that would protect first-time deserters from criminal liability if they voluntarily returned to their units. In January 2026, Defence Minister Mykhailo Fedorov stated that approximately two million people were wanted on suspicion of evading mobilization and that around 200,000 personnel had deserted. Ukraine is believed to be struggling to secure manpower. Against this backdrop, President Zelenskyy and others announced in February 2025 the launch of the "Drone Line" initiative, which integrates UAVs into frontline operations. The initiative reduces requirements for defensive positions by continuously operating UAVs to create areas in which ground forces cannot move without suffering losses. Furthermore, in the same month, Ukraine announced the introduction of "Contract 18-24," a volunteer enlistment system targeting young people aged 18 to 24 that provides preferential measures such as lump-sum payments upon enlistment.[4]

It is pointed out that Russia's SOC for materiel has been undermined by hindered equipment acquisition caused by economic sanctions against the country. Even in this situation, the Russian military maintains its power by various means, such as the ammunition industry operating around the clock, diverting missiles not used for ground attacks, the acquisition of UAVs made in Iran, taking over tanks from Belarus, and the procurement of ammunition and missiles from North Korea. Furthermore, it is pointed out that Russia is capable of continuing war for a long period of time, even under sanctions, because it has sufficient production capacities for equipment including ammunition belonging to the technical scope of the former Soviet Union.

3 According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) on January 27, 2026.

4 The "Contract 18-24" volunteer enlistment system includes preferential treatment measures such as a payment of one million hryvnias upon signing a volunteer contract, exemption from mobilization for one year following one year of military service, and permission to travel abroad. At present, military service following mobilization in Ukraine is believed to be effectively indefinite in duration. In addition, under martial law, Ukrainian men between the ages of 18 and 60 are in principle prohibited from leaving the country. (In August 2025, in order to ensure the right of young Ukrainians to receive an education, individuals aged 18 to 22 were permitted to travel abroad.)

Meanwhile, the equipment used by the AFU is believed to consist primarily of former Soviet-made systems and equipment provided by Western countries and others. In recent years, however, Ukraine is believed to have been working to expand domestically produced equipment, particularly unmanned assets, while also promoting joint production with European countries. In terms of equipment manufactured in the former Soviet Union, only limited parts and ammunition can be acquired from outside of Russia. In addition, although some equipment can be repaired or acquired domestically, it is difficult to carry out such repair or acquisition because the major ammunition industrial cities, such as Kharkiv and Dnipro, are within the attack range of the Russian ground forces. Therefore, support from foreign countries is important in the acquisition of equipment and ammunition as well as in education and training to change over former Soviet Union equipment to Western equipment to maintain SOC. In addition, in September 2025, President Zelenskyy stated that approximately 60% of the weapons possessed by the AFU were domestically produced. Ukraine is currently developing its domestically produced long-range cruise missiles and ballistic missiles, strengthening its long-range strike capabilities against Russia. Ukraine is also believed to be developing a domestically produced air defense system.

Regarding peace negotiations, from January 2026 onward, the United States, Russia, and Ukraine held a series of intermittent trilateral meetings. It has been announced that discussions during these meetings covered documents related to peace as well as reconstruction, the economy, territory, and security guarantees for Ukraine. The progress of the peace negotiations remains unpredictable, and fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces is expected to continue even as the talks proceed.



U.S.-Ukraine-Russia senior officials' talks (February 2026)
[SPUTNIK/Jiji Press Photo]

See Chapter 4, Section 1-2-5 (Securing and Maintaining Sustained Operational Capability)

3 Effects of Russian Aggression against Ukraine on International Affairs and How Various Countries Respond to It

1 General Situation

In response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, in addition to Ukraine's own strong resistance, the international community has implemented strong coordinated sanctions and other measures against Russia. In Europe, the security environment has reached a major turning point in the wake of the aggression against Ukraine, with countries not only increasing their defense spending but also Finland and Sweden, which had previously advocated policies of neutrality, joining NATO. Clearly, the aggression by Russia, which saw NATO's eastward expansion as a threat to itself, prompted European countries to shift their security policies in this manner.

In this view, Japan needs to pay attention to the future developments of the situation in Europe, including its strategic effects and recognize that Euro-Atlantic security and Indo-Pacific security are inseparable. This is because Japan is a close ally of the United States, a NATO member state and is located on the opposite side of Europe across the Eurasian Continent where Russia also sits. In addition, the change in the European situation in response to the Russian aggression against Ukraine can also have an impact on global affairs including developments of the strategic competition between the United States and China and impact on Asia. In any case, it is necessary to monitor the related situations closely with great interest.

2 How NATO Member States and Other Countries Deal with the Situation

Russia's aggression against Ukraine prompted a rapidly growing alarm amid European countries, and Russia's aggressive actions are being viewed as the most severe and direct threat to European and northern Atlantic security.[5] With renewed awareness of the threat of Russia, NATO member states direct their efforts at enhancing defense cooperation under the collective defense system of NATO and pursue the development of defense capabilities in each country. For example, the unit scale in the eastern direction is expanded as needed, and an agreement has been made to put 300,000 and more troops into high readiness conditions in place of NATO Response Forces.

See Chapter 3, Section 9-2 (Enhancement of Multilateral Security Frameworks)

Several nations including NATO member states provide equipment, training support and the like to Ukraine depending on the progress of the war. At the beginning of the war, the donor countries provided portable anti-tank missiles and man-portable surface-to-air missiles that seemed to contribute to preventing front-line expansion by delaying the advancement of Russian military armored units and reducing the strength of airborne troops. After the AFU stopped Russia's full-scale aggression, the countries moved toward providing large equipment that helps suppress and secure wide areas in ground fighting, such as tanks, armored vehicles and howitzers, for the Ukrainian military's counteroffensive. In January 2023, each country announced for the first time the provision of tanks and infantry fighting vehicles not made by the former Soviet Union, beginning with the delivery of German tanks to Ukraine by Poland in February of the same year.

They also came to provide longer-range artillery to attack enemy bases, following the concentration of AFRF troops in the eastern Ukraine region.

Furthermore, the handing over of air defense systems from various countries rapidly progressed as a result of Russian armed forces commencing missile attacks targeting the entirety of Ukraine, including civil facilities, starting in October 2022. It was also reported that an air defense system called "Patriot," capable of coping with ballistic missiles, was provided.

Some NATO member states stated that they would deliver fighter jets made by the former Soviet Union in March 2023, and the United Kingdom and the Netherlands stated in May that the two countries would establish an "international union" for fighter jets acquisition and flight training. Furthermore, the United States stated in the G7 Hiroshima Summit Meeting that it would support the multilateral initiative for the flight training of fourth-generation fighter jets including F-16 fighters. By early 2024, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, and Norway offered to provide F-16 fighters. In August 2024, President Zelenskyy announced that F-16 fighters had been provided and that Ukraine had commenced related operations. It appears that, by January 2025, fighters had already been provided by the Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway.

In addition, in November 2024, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France apparently granted their permission to use long-range missiles on Russian territory.

Moreover, in July 2025, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte and U.S. President Donald Trump agreed to provide U.S.-made equipment to Ukraine using funding from European countries, and the Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List (PURL) framework was introduced. In August 2025, NATO announced the first round of weapons assistance under this framework. Furthermore, following a meeting of NATO foreign ministers in December of the same year, Secretary General Rutte stated that NATO member states and partner countries had already contributed USD 4 billion to PURL and that the total was expected to reach USD 5 billion by the end of the year.

The cumulative security support from the United States to Ukraine since the launch of the former Biden administration amounts to at least USD 66.5 billion, including more than USD 65.9 billion announced after the start of Russia's aggression against Ukraine (as of January 9, 2025). In addition, the United States has provided not only various kinds of equipment in large quantities but also familiarization training for newly delivered equipment and boot camp training for newly enlisted soldiers and other personnel outside Ukraine.

The United Kingdom has also provided continuous support alongside the United States and other countries to Ukraine by supplying equipment and dispatching training instructors since Russia "annexed" the Crimean Peninsula in 2014. In particular, the United Kingdom took the plunge to announce that it would provide its main battle tanks in January 2023 ahead of any other country. It also provided air-launched long-range cruise missiles. The Starmer administration stated that it would strengthen its support further and announced that it would provide a new mobile air defense system in 2025. In addition, similarly to the United States, the United Kingdom has been actively disclosing information about the

5 NATO adopted a new Strategic Concept for the first time since 2010 in the summit meeting held in June 2022. In the previous strategic concept, the Europe-Atlantic region was considered peaceful and the possibility of an attack on the NATO territory was considered small; however, in the current strategic concept, the Europe-Atlantic region is not considered peaceful and the possibility of an attack on the member states' territories is deemed impossible to rule out. Furthermore, Russia, with which a "genuine strategic partnership" was pursued in the previous strategic concept, has been positioned as "the most serious and direct threat to the security of the member states and the peace and stability of the Europe-Atlantic region."

Russian military movement to counter Russia's disinformation and contain the action of the AFRF through announcements by high officials and posting on social media.

France, together with Germany, has been acting as a mediator between Russia and Ukraine in the "Normandy Format,"[6] to peacefully resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine. In addition, France provides equipment such as wheeled armored vehicles, missile air-defense systems, and air-launched long-range cruise missiles to Ukraine.

Moreover, since the beginning of 2025, the countries comprising the "coalition forces," led by the United Kingdom and France, have continued to hold meetings to discuss the peace process, support for Ukraine, sanctions against Russia, and security guarantees for Ukraine. In January 2026, a summit meeting involving the United States and Ukraine was held, at which the "Paris Declaration" concerning security guarantees for Ukraine was announced. On the same day, the United Kingdom, France, and Ukraine also signed a letter of intent regarding the deployment of troops to Ukraine in the event that a peace agreement is concluded.

Germany drastically changed its defense strategy after Russia's aggression against Ukraine, announcing to deliver infantry fighting vehicles and surface-to-air missile systems and started to deliver its main battle tanks directly to Ukraine as well as permit the transfer of German-made main battle tanks from third-party countries to Ukraine in January 2023. Since then, Germany has been continuously supplying artillery shells and air defense missiles.

Canada has been providing training support to the AFU since 2015. Since Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Canada has been actively supporting Ukraine, such as by promising CAD 8.5 billion in military support as of April 2026.

The EU has also been providing military support to Ukraine. As of December 2025, the total amount of support has reached USD 70 billion, including USD 6.6 billion provided through the European Peace Facility, an EU fund. In addition, in September 2025, the EU announced that approximately 80% of the two million artillery shells it had pledged to provide to Ukraine had already been delivered.

In December 2024, NATO Secretary General Rutte announced the establishment of the NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) at a U.S. military base in Germany, and stated that the organization had already commenced operations. As a result, control of the coordination of Ukrainian military support by Western countries was transferred from the United States to NATO.

In addition, technical support provided by private companies to Ukraine is also attracting attention. Satellite internet services using satellite constellations provided by U.S. companies in response to the request from the Ukrainian government are used not only as a means of communication for the Ukrainian people but also to operate the Ukrainian military's unmanned assets. In January 2026, Ukraine's Ministry of Defence stated that it had confirmed Russian attacks involving loitering UAVs using the service, and subsequently announced that, at the Ministry's request, a U.S. company had implemented temporary countermeasures against Russia's unauthorized use of the service. In February of the same year, Ukrainian Defence Minister Mykhailo Fedorov announced that use of the service within Ukraine would become subject to a registration system.

Moreover, it is pointed out that some European and U.S. IT/security companies have been supporting Ukraine's cybersecurity since before aggression against Ukraine began, and have successfully reduced and localized damage from Russian cyberattacks.

While players such as NATO member states and other countries moved toward supporting Ukraine, some countries are taking their own measures. Türkiye, which has deep relations with both Russia and Ukraine, shows consideration for Russia to some extent. Concretely, Türkiye declares support for Ukraine while basically not implementing economic sanctions against Russia.

Additionally, the former Orbán administration of Hungary, a NATO member state highly dependent on Russia for energy, adopted a conciliatory stance toward Russia and did not supply Ukraine with weapons, saying this was against its national interests. However, the new Magyar administration, which was inaugurated in May 2026, has positioned Russia as a "threat" and as the "aggressor" against Ukraine. Attention will be focused on the new administration's moves going forward.

3 How Other Regions Respond

On February 23, 2023, ahead of the first anniversary of the start of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for, among other things, the immediate cessation of the aggression. A total of 141 countries—over 70% of all member states—voted in favor of the resolution. On the other hand, in addition to Russia, some countries and regions do not sympathize with this movement. For example, six countries and regions including Belarus and North Korea were against the draft resolution, and 32 countries including India and China abstained from voting.

North Korea is showing its stance of standing by Russia, for example, as it voted against the UN General Assembly's resolution calling for the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine and claims that the United States and other Western countries are to be blamed for the conflict

6 The framework of dialogue between Ukraine, Russia, France, and Germany that has had consultations for a settlement of the situation based on the Minsk agreements since 2014 when the Ukraine situation deteriorated.

in Ukraine. In addition, since 2023, North Korea has been providing ammunition and weapons that include ballistic missiles to Russia. In 2024, North Korean troops were deployed to Russia and then engaged in combat against Ukraine. Japan continues to strongly condemn such military cooperation between Russia and North Korea, as it further exacerbates the situation in Ukraine and constitutes violations of relevant UN Security Council resolutions that comprehensively prohibit the transfer or procurement of weapons and related materials involving North Korea.

See Chapter 3, Section 4-1-4 (Progress of Military Cooperation with Russia)



A prosecutor examining the wreckage of a missile allegedly made by North Korea used in an attack on Kharkiv in northeastern Ukraine (Kharkiv, Ukraine) [AFP-Jiji].

Since the United States' withdrawal from the nuclear agreement in 2018, Iran has intensified its confrontational stance toward the West, while strengthening its ties with Russia, particularly in the economic and military fields. Although Iran advocates a diplomatic resolution to the aggression against Ukraine, it has shown a certain degree of understanding toward Russia's position and has criticized the sanctions imposed on Russia by the United States and its allies.

The United States announced in July 2022 Iran's plan to provide UAVs to Russia and, in September 2022, pointed out that Russia was using Iran-made UAVs for attacks as well as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR). The Ukrainian military also announced that Russia conducted attacks in various parts of Ukraine using Iranian UAVs. To this, Iran claims that the delivery of Iranian UAVs to Russia was carried out before the aggression against Ukraine and suggests that their purpose was not for use in the aggression against Ukraine. In February 2023, William Burns, then Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), pointed out that Russia is investigating the possibility of supporting Iran's missile plan and providing fighter jets in return for Iran's support. In September 2024, he also indicated that Russia had received ballistic missiles from Iran and that the progress of cooperation between the two countries must be closely observed.

China avoids direct criticism of Russia in respect of the aggression, requesting "self-restraint and dialogue" to both Russia and Ukraine and takes a standpoint from which China will play constructive roles in its own ways toward a solution to the Ukraine issues. However, China insists that Russia's actions are caused by the "Cold War mentality" of the United States and other NATO countries and that it understands Russia's reasonable concerns about security issues and criticizes sanctions against Russia and equipment delivery to Ukraine from Western countries. In September 2022, President Xi Jinping, during the first in-person China-Russia summit since the aggression began, expressed strong support for issues related to each other's core interests. Furthermore, during the China-Russia summit held online in December of the same year, Xi stated that China would continue to uphold an objective and impartial stance on the aggression against Ukraine and would play a constructive role in promoting international unity and cooperation toward a peaceful resolution of the Ukraine crisis. Furthermore, he stated that China will play constructive roles in peace negotiations and reconstruction after the conflict in a document titled "China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis" published in February 2023. During his visit to Russia in March of the same year, Xi held talks with Putin and released a joint statement. In the statement, Xi positively evaluated Russia's commitment to resuming the early resumption of peace negotiations and expressed opposition to unilateral sanctions not based on UN Security Council resolutions. In October the same year, President Putin visited China for the first time since the aggression against Ukraine and held a summit meeting with President Xi Jinping, mutually confirming the deepening relationship of trust between the two countries. Russia, which is internationally isolated with its aggression against Ukraine, will find its political and military cooperation with China more important than ever. In addition, it has been pointed out that China is boosting Russia's SOC by transferring dual-use items (items that can be used for both civilian and military applications) to the country.

On the other hand, it is seen that Western countries are taking action to contain China which is deepening cooperation with Russia. In September 2022, then NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg pointed out that China's continued cooperation with Russia even after the aggression against Ukraine, together with its opposition to NATO enlargement, constituted a reason for NATO to regard China as a security challenge. In addition, the United States has added to its Entity List—restricting exports from the United States—Chinese companies believed to have supplied U.S.-made integrated circuits to Russia's military industry and to have provided satellite imagery to the Russian private military company "Wagner," among others. The United States has also imposed sanctions on Chinese companies and the like involved in the development and production of Russia's long-range attack UAVs.

Japan, as a country neighboring both countries, must

continue to monitor with concern the trend of cooperation between the two countries, which has deepened further since Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

See Chapter 3, Section 2-3 (Relations with Countries and Regions)

India emphasized the need for an immediate stop to hostile operations and violence, as well as the need for a solution through diplomatic means and dialogue regarding the aggression against Ukraine and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated "Now is not the age of war" to President Putin at the Indo-Russia Summit Meeting in September 2022, while India, which has traditionally deep relations with Russia, avoids explicit criticism of Russia. India continues to maintain a strong military cooperative relationship with Russia.

See Chapter 3, Section 5-5-6 (1) (Relations with Asian Countries)

Chapter 3 Defense Policies of Other Countries and Regions

Section 1 The United States

1 General Situation

In January 2025, Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 47th president of the United States. During his election campaign, President Trump focused mainly on economic policy as well as border control and immigration policy under the slogans "America First" and "Make America Great Again" while claiming with regard to security that he would "end wars." Specifically, he mentioned an early end to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, deterrence of the activities of pro-Iranian armed groups in the Middle East through strengthened pressure on Iran, and the stabilization of the Taiwan situation through the introduction of tariffs on China and other measures.

Of these issues, regarding an early end to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, President Trump expressed his intention to meet with President Putin soon after taking office. In February 2025, he held the first U.S.-Russia Summit Telephone Talk of his second administration, and in the same month held a U.S.-Ukraine Summit Meeting with President Zelenskyy. In August, the first U.S.-Russia Summit Meeting since President Trump's return to office was held in Alaska. Although both sides assessed the talks as being constructive, no ceasefire agreement was reached. Thereafter, consultations between the United States and Russia and between the United States and Ukraine continued, and in November the United States presented a peace proposal to both Ukraine and Russia. For this peace proposal, the United States engaged not only in discussions with Ukraine and Russia but also in consultations between European leaders and President Trump. January 2026 saw developments such as the first trilateral talks among the United States, Russia, and Ukraine. On the other hand, as of that month there was still no prospect of a ceasefire, and future developments continue to be closely watched.

See Chapter 2, Section 2 (Russia's Aggression against Ukraine and the Future Outlook)

As for the situation in the Middle East, President Trump visited various countries in the Middle East in May 2025 as the destination of the first full-scale overseas trip of his second administration. During the visit, he reached agreements on extremely large-scale arms transfers with countries including Saudi Arabia and called for participation in the "Abraham Accords," the Middle East peace initiative promoted during his first administration. Furthermore, he also met with Syrian Interim President al-Sharaa and demonstrated an emphasis on the Middle East region, including by directing the lifting of sanctions on Syria.

With regard to the situation in Gaza, even before the inauguration of his second administration in January 2025, President Trump had officials from his incoming administration participate in ceasefire talks conducted by the former Biden administration with Israel, Egypt, and Qatar. This resulted in the implementation on January 19 of a three-stage ceasefire agreement, although the ceasefire broke down in March. Meanwhile, the United States continued its efforts toward a ceasefire. In September, it presented a proposal to both Israel and Hamas calling for the release of hostages and the commencement of negotiations. However, shortly thereafter Israel carried out an attack on a Hamas office located in Qatar. In response, the United States sought to contain the situation through summit meetings with both Israel and Qatar, and at the end of the same month announced the "Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict." In October the following month, President Trump announced that both Israel and Hamas had agreed to the plan. He subsequently visited Israel and Egypt and announced the "Trump Declaration for Enduring Peace and Prosperity." In the same month, the United States established a Civil-Military Coordination Center for humanitarian assistance and international cooperation, and in January 2026 continued its efforts by establishing the "Board of Peace."

As for relations with Iran, in February 2025 following the launch of the administration, the United States decided on a policy of applying maximum pressure on Iran over its nuclear development and destabilizing activities in the Middle East. The United States demanded consultations concerning Iran's nuclear development and indicated its intention to carry out attacks should no agreement be reached. Subsequently, consultations were held between authorities from the United States and Iran. However, during the exchange of attacks between Israel and Iran that occurred in June, the United States bombed Iranian nuclear-related facilities as part of Operation Midnight Hammer. The United States declared that

Iran's key nuclear enrichment facilities had been completely destroyed due to the bombing, while calling for the continuation of dialogue. Thereafter, Iran continued to assert that its nuclear development was solely for civilian purposes and that it had no intention of developing nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, in August 2025, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany initiated procedures to reimpose all previous United Nations Security Council sanctions against Iran, citing Iran's significant non-performance with the nuclear agreement, and the sanctions were reimposed in September the following month. In January 2026, demonstrations that had begun the previous month against the backdrop of worsening economic conditions spread throughout Iran. Clashes between demonstrators and government forces attempting to suppress the unrest resulted in numerous casualties. In response, President Trump indicated the possibility of intervention. Furthermore, at the end of January, he stated that a carrier strike group was heading toward Iran and urged Iran to engage in talks promptly. Although Iran pushed back against this, talks with the United States were held in February with mediation from regional countries including Türkiye and Saudi Arabia.

As negotiations encountered difficulties, on February 28, Israel's Ministry of Defense announced that it had "launched a preemptive strike against Iran to remove threats to the State of Israel." At around 4:00 p.m. on the same day, media reports indicated that multiple explosion sounds had been confirmed in Tehran. Subsequently, President Trump announced that the United States had commenced "major combat" operations against Iran. Stating that it has been the consistent policy of both the United States and his administration that a regime supporting terrorism must never be allowed to possess nuclear weapons, President Trump also called on the Iranian people to take action with a view toward regime change.

On the same day, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) announced the commencement of Operation Epic Fury at the direction of President Trump. CENTCOM stated that its targets included the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) command and control facilities, Iranian air defense capabilities, missile and drone launch sites, and military airfields. It also stated that it had successfully defended against hundreds of Iranian missile and drone attacks, that no U.S. casualties had been reported, that damage to U.S. facilities had been minimal, and that operations had not been affected. CENTCOM further stated that during the first hours of the operation, it utilized various precision-guided munitions across the land, maritime, and air domains, and that it had also used low-cost one-way attack drones (the Low-cost Uncrewed Combat Attack System (LUCAS)) for the first time in combat.

In addition, following the Israel Defense Forces' announcement later that day that it had killed seven senior officials, including IRGC Commander Pakpour, President Trump announced on March 1 that Iran's Supreme Leader Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had died. Although Iranian authorities initially denied the statement by the United States, Iranian state media subsequently reported that Grand Ayatollah Khamenei's death had been confirmed. Thereafter, Iran conducted a series of missile and drone attacks against Israel as well as U.S. military-related facilities, airports, ports, energy infrastructure, and the like located in the Gulf states, resulting in a continuing exchange of attacks between the United States, Israel, and Iran.

On March 2, media reports indicated that the IRGC Navy had announced the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and declared that all vessels transiting the Strait would be subject to attack. Subsequently, there were successive reports including that civilian tankers that failed to heed Iranian warnings had come under attack, as well as reports that Iran had laid underwater mines in the area. On March 12, Grand Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, who had succeeded the late Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, issued a statement indicating that the closure of the Strait of Hormuz would be continued as part of the pressure against the enemy. Against this backdrop, while suggesting the continuation of talks with Iran, President Trump repeatedly stated that the United States would strike power plants and energy infrastructure throughout Iran if Iran did not fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

On April 8, President Trump posted on his social media account that attacks would be suspended for two weeks on the condition that Iran agree to the complete, immediate, and safe reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. Subsequently, Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi stated that Iran would suspend its attacks on the condition that attacks against Iran cease, and that, for a period of two weeks, Iran would coordinate with its armed forces to enable the safe passage of vessels through the Strait of Hormuz. In addition, Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif announced that he had undertaken efforts to mediate a ceasefire and that ceasefire negotiations between the United States and Iran were planned to take place in Pakistan. Israel also expressed its support for President Trump's decision.

Secretary of War Hegseth[1] and Chairman of the Joint

1 In September 2025, President Trump issued an executive order permitting the Department of Defense to use the name "Department of War (DoW)" in official correspondence of government agencies, ceremonial contexts, and non-statutory documents. Since then, the U.S. government has generally used the terms "Department of War" and "Secretary of War."

Chiefs of Staff Caine emphasized that the suspension of attacks was temporary at a press conference[2] held the same day. They further stated that U.S. Forces would continue to be deployed in the Middle East in order to resume combat operations should Iran refuse a negotiated settlement.

On April 11, a U.S. delegation led by Vice President JD Vance held talks in Pakistan with an Iranian delegation led by Parliamentary Speaker Ghalibaf on ending the hostilities. However, after approximately 21 hours of discussions, no agreement was reached.

On the same day, CENTCOM announced that two guided-missile destroyers had begun setting conditions for clearing underwater mines in the Strait of Hormuz and that additional forces, including underwater drones, would be deployed for the clearance effort. CENTCOM also announced that U.S. Forces would begin implementing a blockade of all maritime traffic entering and exiting Iranian ports on the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman on April 13 at 10 a.m. (EST).

On April 15, President Trump stated that ceasefire talks with Iran would soon be held in Pakistan. On April 19, Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi announced the lifting of Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz. However, in response to U.S. statements indicating that its maritime blockade would remain in place, the IRGC once again declared the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. As a second round of ceasefire talks between the two countries failed to materialize, President Trump announced on April 22 that the suspension of attacks would be extended indefinitely until Iran presented a unified proposal.

With regard to the maritime blockade, CENTCOM announced that on April 20, it had fired upon and stopped an Iranian-flagged cargo vessel after it failed to comply with warnings. In addition, maritime interdiction operations against Iranian-flagged and sanctions-related vessels were conducted in the areas of responsibility (AORs) of other unified combatant commands. U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) announced that it had seized two tankers in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. On the Iranian side, IRGC Navy announced on April 22 that they fired upon three cargo vessels and seized two of them.

Against this backdrop, on May 3, CENTCOM announced that, pursuant to President Trump's direction, it would begin supporting Project Freedom on May 4 with the objective of restoring freedom of navigation for commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. At the same time, CENTCOM stated that the naval blockade would be maintained. In response to these developments, Iran was reported to have carried out attacks against neighboring countries, U.S. naval vessels, and other targets. On May 5, Secretary of State Rubio expressed the view that Operation Epic Fury had concluded, having achieved its objectives, and that efforts had transitioned to Project Freedom. On May 6, President Trump stated on his social media account that, while the naval blockade would remain in effect, "Project Freedom" would be suspended for a short period. Thereafter, even as the maritime blockade and the exchange of attacks by both sides continued, the United States and Iran continued negotiations toward an agreement. On June 15, 2026, the United States and Iran announced that they had reached an agreement on a memorandum of understanding concerning the ending of hostilities, among other matters. On June 18, President Trump and Iranian President Pezeshkian, together with Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif in his capacity as mediator, signed the memorandum.

See Section 10-1 (Middle East and Africa)

With regard to the Indo-Pacific situation, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, who assumed office in January 2025, gave a message to each service in which he stated that the United States would achieve "peace through strength" under the leadership of President Trump in three ways—by restoring the warrior ethos, rebuilding the military, and reestablishing deterrence. In particular, regarding the reestablishment of deterrence, he stated that the United States would work with allies and partners to deter China's infringements in the Indo-Pacific.

Furthermore, at the Ukraine Defense Contact Group and Meeting of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Ministers of Defence held in Belgium in February 2025, Secretary Hegseth stated that the United States is facing a peer competitor, China, in the Indo-Pacific, so the NATO member states should take responsibility for the security of Europe, including by increasing their defense expenditures. He then stated that the European countries should face the security issues in their region while the United States remains committed to defense cooperation with NATO and Europe. At the Shangri-La Dialogue held in May 2025, Secretary Hegseth stated that as European allies assume a greater share of the burden, the United States would be able to focus on the Indo-Pacific, which he described as the priority theater, and that

2 At a press conference held on April 8, 2026, Secretary of War Hegseth and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Caine stated that as of that date, during Operation Epic Fury, (1) More than 80% of Iran's air defense systems had been destroyed, with strikes on more than 1,500 air defense targets, more than 450 ballistic missile storage facilities, and 800 drone storage facilities; (2) More than 2,000 command-and-control nodes had been destroyed, degrading Iran's ability to attack the United States and like-minded countries; (3) More than 90% of the Iranian Navy's regular fleet had been sunk, over 150 vessels had been sent to the bottom of the Arabian Gulf, and more than 95% of underwater mines had been destroyed; and (4) More than 90% of Iran's drone production facilities, more than 80% of its nuclear industrial base, and about 80% of its nuclear-related industrial infrastructure had been struck. They also stated that the operation had involved more than 10,000 air missions, including 62 bomber missions, and that more than 1,700 ballistic missiles and drones had been intercepted in cooperation with partner Gulf region countries.
Meanwhile, as an example of attacks by Iran, on April 3 the Iranian state news agency reported that the IRGC had shot down a U.S. F-15 fighter aircraft. In response, CENTCOM announced on April 5 that the rescue of the two crew members from the downed aircraft had been completed and that operations against Iran would continue. President Trump described the rescue mission as a demonstration of the capability and bravery of U.S. Forces.

China's behavior toward neighboring countries and the wider world constituted an urgent wake-up call. He also stated that "America First" did not mean "America Alone," calling for unity against common threats and stating that peace and stability in the region would be maintained by strengthening relations with allies and partners. In addition, he stated that any attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion in the South China Sea and along the First Island Chain would be unacceptable. He further stated that U.S. allies in the Indo-Pacific region should look to the example of NATO member states, which had pledged to allocate 5% of their GDP (gross domestic product) to defense spending and related expenditures.

In October 2025, Secretary Hegseth, who visited Japan accompanying President Trump, held his first meeting with Defense Minister Koizumi. The Ministers candidly exchanged and shared the views on increasingly severe security situation in the Indo-Pacific, and, based on the matters concurred between Prime Minister Takaichi and President Trump, confirmed that Japan and the United States would further strengthen deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. Especially, Defense Minister Koizumi expressed his commitment to continue working on fundamentally reinforcing of Japan's defense capabilities and increasing Japan's defense spending as Japan's own initiative, and Secretary Hegseth expressed his support.

See Part III, Chapter 2, Section 1-3 (Policy Consultations between Japan and the United States)



Secretary of War Hegseth installing the "Department of War" nameplate
[U.S. Department of War]

With regard to other regions, President Trump had asserted that European NATO member states should bear defense expenditures equivalent to 5% of their GDP and take responsibility for Europe's defense. At the NATO Summit held in June 2025, member states agreed to raise by 2035 their targets for defense-related spending to a total of 5% of their GDP, consisting of at least 3.5% for core defense expenditures and up to 1.5% for defense- and security-related expenditures. President Trump also expressed the view that the United States should possess the Panama Canal due to concerns including China's presence there, and Greenland, an autonomous territory of Denmark, due to security considerations in the Arctic region.

With regard to the Panama Canal, Secretary Hegseth visited Panama in April 2025 and announced that an agreement had been reached regarding the use of the Panama Canal by U.S. military ships and the deployment of U.S. Forces to bases located in Panama.

With regard to Greenland, in February 2026, NATO announced "Arctic Sentry"[3] as an initiative to strengthen security in the Arctic region, including Greenland.

Immediately after his inauguration in January 2025, President Trump initiated military operations to secure the southern border, stating that the objective was to crack down on illegal immigration and the inflow of narcotics. From September 2025 onward, the United States deployed numerous naval vessels around the Caribbean Sea and sank vessels identified as drug-smuggling ships. President Trump had also accused Venezuelan President Maduro of leading domestic drug cartels and facilitating the flow of narcotics into the United States. In January 2026, the United States conducted a sudden strike against Venezuela, described as support for law enforcement operations, detained President Maduro, and transferred him to the United States, where he is currently standing trial. Attention will continue to focus on the future actions of the second Trump administration toward the Western Hemisphere and the Americas.

See Section 9 (Europe and Canada), Section 11-2 (Maritime Trends)

1 Security Policy

In December 2025, the second Trump administration released its National Security Strategy (NSS).[4] The President's message at the beginning states that the Trump administration rescued the United States and the world from the brink of catastrophe and disaster and has been acting with urgent and historic speed to restore U.S. strength at home and abroad and to bring peace and stability to the world. It also states that the second Trump administration will strengthen border security

3 A new cross-domain initiative led by NATO aimed at strengthening security in the Arctic and high-latitude regions, with China and Russia in mind. The initiative consolidates NATO member-state exercises conducted near the Arctic region under a single command structure, exemplified by Denmark's "Arctic Endurance" exercise.

4 Both the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the National Defense Strategy (NDS) are required by law to be submitted to Congress within a certain period of time. Titles 50 and 10 of the United States Code respectively stipulate that the NSS shall be submitted to Congress no later than 150 days after the date on which a new President takes office and the NDS shall be submitted as soon as possible after a newly elected President has nominated a new Secretary of Defense, once the Senate has approved the nomination.

and reinforce the military through USD 1 trillion in investment.[5] It further states that the administration will rebuild alliances, and calls on allies to increase their contributions to collective defense, including through the goal of NATO member states raising defense spending and related expenditures to 5% of their GDP. Furthermore, it indicates the position that the administration will place the United States first in all of its efforts.

As for its objectives and means, the NSS raises ensuring the United States' survival, prioritizing the well-being and interests of its citizens, protecting the country against external threats, controlling its borders, and addressing immigration. It also calls for maintaining the world's most powerful and technologically advanced military, as well as building nuclear deterrence and next-generation missile defense such as the Golden Dome[6] concept to protect the American people, U.S. assets overseas, and allies. It also mentions keeping the Indo-Pacific free and open, preserving freedom of navigation in all crucial sea lines of communication, maintaining secure and reliable supply chains and access to critical materials, maintaining stability and governance capacity in the Western Hemisphere, preserving the freedom and security of Europe, and promoting stability in the Middle East, ensuring that U.S. technology and U.S. standards for fields such as AI, biotech, and quantum computing drive the world forward.

The NSS also lists military power, the U.S. network of alliances, geographic advantages and natural resources, soft power, reindustrialization and reshoring industrial production, and advanced technologies as among the concrete means of achieving these objectives.

In addition, the NSS states that President Trump's foreign policy is based on "America First," and identifies its basic principles as focused definition of the national interest, peace through strength, predisposition to non-interventionism, flexible realism, primacy of nations, balance of power, and fairness through increased defense expenditures by allies. The NSS also identifies as priorities burden-sharing and burden-shifting for defense, the realignment of various regions through peace, and economic security, including the revival of the defense industrial base.

With regard to regional policy, the NSS advocates a Trump-style Monroe Doctrine for the Western Hemisphere, stating that the United States will restore its preeminence in the hemisphere, and protect the homeland and its access to key geographies throughout the region. With respect to Asia, it describes the Indo-Pacific as an economic and geopolitical battleground and states that the United States will continue to succeed in competition in the region. It also reaffirms its commitment to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). In addition, the NSS states that President Trump overturned more than three decades of mistaken U.S. perceptions regarding China and that it is necessary to protect the U.S. economy and the American people from threats such as large-scale intellectual property theft and threats to supply chains. Furthermore, it states that the United States will work together with allies and partners, strengthen relations with India, and promote cooperation among Japan, the United States, Australia, and India.

With regard to Taiwan, the NSS states that there is, rightly, much attention on Taiwan. While acknowledging Taiwan's dominance in semiconductor production, it argues that the principal reason for its importance lies in its provision of direct access to the "Second Island Chain" and its role in splitting Northeast and Southeast Asia into two distinct theaters. The NSS further notes that given that one-third of global shipping passes through the South China Sea, this has major implications for the U.S. economy. It identifies as a priority the maintenance of military overmatch and the deterrence of a conflict over Taiwan and states that the United States will continue to uphold its declaratory policy of not supporting any unilateral change to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. The NSS further states that the United States will build a military capable of denying aggression anywhere in the First Island Chain, but that this cannot and should not have to be accomplished by U.S. Forces alone, making it important for allies to increase spending and take action for collective defense. Moreover, the NSS states that diplomatic efforts toward allies and partners will focus on pressing allies and partners to allow U.S. Forces free access to their ports and other facilities, to spend more on their own defense, and to invest in capabilities aimed at deterring aggression. Furthermore, it states that cooperation with all countries that share interests in the South China Sea, including India and Japan, is important. In addition, in light of President Trump's calls for Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) to assume a greater share of the burden, it states that the United States should encourage these countries to increase their



Golden Dome for America concept (diagram) [U.S. Department of War (courtesy of Lockheed Martin)]

5 This figure refers not only to Department of War expenditures, but to the overall expenditures of defense-related government agencies, including the Department of Energy.

6 In the executive order issued by President Trump in January 2025, the system was referred to as "The Iron Dome for America." However, it later came to be known as "Golden Dome for America (GDA)." In this White Paper, it is referred to simply as "Golden Dome."

defense spending. It further states that the focus should be on the capabilities, including new capabilities, necessary to deter adversaries and defend the First Island Chain. It also states that the United States should maintain a determined stance in urging Taiwan and Australia to increase their defense expenditures.

2 Defense Policies

In January 2026, following the release of the NSS in the previous month, the second Trump administration published the National Defense Strategy (NDS). The NDS states that when President Trump took office in January 2025, the United States was facing one of the most dangerous security environments since the end of the Cold War due to factors such as the overseas outsourcing of industry, including the defense industrial base, and prolonged involvement in overseas wars with unclear objectives such as regime change and nation-building. It further states that this situation was changing following President Trump's return to office. The document states that the Department of War will focus on restoring "peace through strength" and will adopt an approach based on flexible, practical realism, looking at the world in a clear-eyed way and serving U.S. national interests.

Regarding the security environment, the NDS states that from the perspective of "America First," it is essential to evaluate, sort, and prioritize threats. At the same time, it states that even lower-priority threats will not be neglected and will instead be addressed in a sustainable manner. It also discusses simultaneous challenges involving the U.S. homeland and the Western Hemisphere, China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and multiple theaters. In addition, in line with the NSS, the NDS identifies four major lines of effort for achieving "peace through strength": (1) defend the U.S. homeland; (2) deter China in the Indo-Pacific through strength, not confrontation; (3) increase burden-sharing with U.S. allies and partners; and (4) supercharge the U.S. defense industrial base.

With particular regard to deterring China in the Indo-Pacific, the NDS states that the United States seeks a stable peace, fair trade, and respectful relations with China, while emphasizing the importance of negotiating from a position of strength. The NDS also states that China is the second most powerful country in the world—behind only the United States—and that the speed, scale, and quality of China's historic military buildup speak for themselves, including forces for operations in the Western Pacific as well as capabilities of reaching targets much farther away. In addition, the NDS states that given that the Indo-Pacific will soon account for more than half the global economy, the security, freedom, and prosperity of the American people are directly linked to the United States' "ability to trade and engage from a position of strength" in the region. It warns that, should the region come under the dominance of China or another power, the United States could effectively be denied access to the global economy, potentially resulting in long-term adverse effects on its economic outlook, including the ability to reindustrialize. For this reason, the NDS states that the United States will erect a strong denial defense along the First Island Chain and urge key regional allies and partners to do more for collective defense. It further states that a "decent peace" in the region—on terms favorable to Americans but that China can also accept and live under—is achievable, and that this constitutes the premise of President Trump's diplomacy, while the efforts of the Department of War are intended to provide the undergirding strength for this approach. The NDS also states that the objective is not confrontation with China, but rather the maintenance of stability through deterrence based on "peace through strength," with emphasis placed on supporting strategic stability as well as deconfliction and de-escalation.

Regarding Russia, the NDS describes it as a persistent but manageable threat to NATO's eastern member states and indicates that, through its aggression against Ukraine, Russia has demonstrated deep reservoirs of military and industrial power as well as national resolve to sustain a prolonged war in a neighboring region. The NDS further states that Russia's modernization and diversification of the world's largest nuclear arsenal, together with its undersea, space, and cyber capabilities, could also pose a threat to the U.S. homeland, making homeland defense necessary. At the same time, the NDS states that European NATO member states significantly surpass Russia in terms of economic scale, population, and latent military power, and have also committed to defense spending and related expenditures equivalent to 5% of their GDP. It further states that, while the United States will continue its engagement in Europe, it will prioritize homeland defense and deterrence against China, and that ending Russia's aggression against Ukraine is first and foremost Europe's own responsibility.

Regarding North Korea, the NDS describes it as a direct military threat to the ROK and Japan, stating in particular that its missile forces are capable of striking targets in both countries with conventional weapons, nuclear weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction. The NDS also states that North Korea's nuclear forces are increasingly capable of threatening the U.S. homeland and that, through their growing scale and sophistication, they constitute a "clear and present danger" of nuclear attack on the U.S. homeland.

In addition, regarding the simultaneous emergence of challenges across multiple theaters, the NDS states that it is reasonable to prepare for the possibility that multiple potential adversaries could act in a coordinated or opportunistic fashion. It further states that allies and partners should bear a fair share of the burden for collective defense, emphasizing that this is not only the right thing to do but also strategically vital. The NDS states that if allies invest in defense according to the NATO Summit benchmark of 5% of GDP, they can jointly generate sufficient military power to deter simultaneous

Commentary

The Trump Administration's Initiatives for U.S. Homeland Defense

The second Trump administration released its National Security Strategy (NSS) in December 2025 and National Defense Strategy (NDS) in January 2026. President Trump has emphasized "America First," "peace through strength," and the importance of homeland defense, as well as a focus on the Indo-Pacific region, burden-sharing of defense spending, strengthening of the defense industrial base, and similar matters. As documents clearly reiterating the above approaches of the second Trump administration, the Strategies are expected to serve as an important guide to understanding the U.S. government's future defense policies.

The priority of the NSS and NDS is homeland defense, an approach directly tied to U.S. national interests. Both documents identify illegal immigration and the influx of drugs, in addition to nuclear weapons, various conventional forces, and threats on the space, cyber, and electromagnetic spectrum as major threats to the U.S. homeland, as well as prioritizing homeland defense and deterrence against China. This section gives an overview of the development of the Golden Dome for America (GDA) and the modernization of the country's nuclear forces, which are both initiatives related to homeland defense that the United States is particularly focused on, and whose developments Japan should also closely monitor.

The GDA initiative was announced in an executive order given in January 2025. Along with ballistic missiles, hypersonic missiles and other aerial attacks have been identified as the most catastrophic threats facing the United States. Moreover, the GDA will be integrated with existing systems, including space-based sensors and interceptors, to build a multi-layered, multi-domain system capable of intercepting any type of missile. It was stated that by enabling operation of the system within three years, during President Trump's term of office, even if hostile forces develop advanced long-range attack capabilities, the U.S. homeland will not be vulnerable to threats.

Under the GDA initiative, the United States will continue to support its allies and forward-deployed U.S. Forces in defending themselves against missile attacks aimed at outside of the U.S. homeland, and cooperate with its allies and other partners on missile defense. In the field of integrated aerial and missile defense, Japan and the United States are currently working on the joint development of a Glide Phase Interceptor (GPI) capable of intercepting hypersonic missiles. As the GPI is positioned as part of the GDA initiative, so too is the U.S. GDA initiative linked to Japan's integrated air and missile defense.

Moreover, regarding the modernization of its nuclear forces, the United States has historically maintained three types of arms as its "nuclear triad": intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) capable of carrying nuclear warheads, strategic bombers, and strategic nuclear submarines. However, the B-52 bomber, which entered in service in the 1950s, and the ICBM Minuteman III, which has been in service for over half a century, have required measures to be put in place for their upgrade and service life extension over the years. Furthermore, research and development into replacing all three types of arms making up the "nuclear triad" with newer models is currently underway as part of modernization initiatives. These U.S. nuclear forces play a vital role in extended deterrence, providing allies with a deterrent against nuclear and other threats; consequently, developments in the modernization of U.S. nuclear forces are also highly relevant to Japan's national defense.

Accordingly, U.S. homeland defense, given as a priority in the NSS and NDS, transcends regional boundaries through various initiatives to also have significant implications for Japan's national defense. The deterrent provided by U.S. military capabilities and the Japan-U.S. Alliance serves as a foundation for ensuring peace and security in Japan and the peace and stability of its surrounding region. When Japan proactively carries out the fundamental reinforcement of its defense capabilities and further enhancement of the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, it will be crucial for Japan to further deepen its understanding of U.S. security policy, including homeland defense.



President Trump announcing the GDA initiative [EPA-Jiji]

aggression and maintain favorable balances of power in key regions. It further states that "peace through strength" over the coming decades can be sustained if U.S. Forces concentrate on homeland defense and the Indo-Pacific, while allies and partners assume primary responsibility in other regions, with the United States transitioning to a role of critical but more limited support. The NDS also states that the United States will prioritize cooperation and engagements with model allies—namely, countries that spend at required defense levels and visibly do more to address regional threats with critical but more limited U.S. support.

Regarding the defense industrial base, the NDS describes it as the core foundation for rebuilding and modernizing the U.S. Forces and maintaining its position as the world's strongest military into the future, as well as the foundation supporting all major lines of effort outlined in the strategy. The document further states that force readiness and the military options available to the President depend on the capabilities of the defense industrial base. It states that the Department of War will expand its own capabilities, broaden the use of nontraditional vendors, and partner with Congress, traditional vendors, and others to promote the restoration of defense industrial capacity. Furthermore, the NDS emphasizes that strengthening the defense industrial base is critically important for enabling the United States to provide equipment support to allies and partners as they assume a greater share of the burden for collective defense.

See Commentary (The Trump Administration's Initiatives for U.S. Homeland Defense)



Secretary of War Hegseth participating in a training exercise in Normandy, France [U.S. Department of War]

3 Engagement in the Indo-Pacific Region

The former Biden administration expressed the stances of deepening partnerships with allies in the Indo-Pacific region, including Japan, and promoting a FOIP through multilateral frameworks such as Japan-Australia-India-U.S., AUKUS, which is a security cooperation framework by the three countries of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States,[7] and other frameworks.

Under the second Trump administration as well, similar policies were presented in November 2025 during Secretary Hegseth's consultations with various countries at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) held in Malaysia. In particular, at the Japan-Australia-Philippines-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting—the fifth such meeting in the past three years—the participants emphasized their continued commitment to promoting their shared vision of FOIP. They also reaffirmed joint efforts among the four countries focused on deterrence and readiness and concurred on strengthening coordinated defense cooperation activities. In addition, the participants expressed serious concern regarding China's destabilizing activities in the East China Sea and South China Sea and strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion. In a meeting with Chinese Minister of National Defense Dong Jun as well, Secretary Hegseth expressed concern at the activities of China in the South China Sea, the vicinity of Taiwan, and the Indo-Pacific region, and communicated the fact that the United States would continue to protect its interests going forward. The two sides concurred on the need to establish channels of communication between their two militaries to avoid conflicts. In addition, during the U.S.-Philippines defense ministers' meeting, Secretary Hegseth announced the establishment of Task Force-Philippines, aimed at improving operational coordination and interoperability in the South China Sea. During the U.S.-India defense ministers' meeting, the two countries stated that they would work closely together toward realizing FOIP and signed the Framework for the U.S.-India Major Defense Partnership for the next decade, demonstrating active engagement in consultations with various countries. Regarding AUKUS as well, the United States stated at the U.S.-Australia Summit Meeting in October 2025 that it would promote the initiative with full commitment.

In addition, with regard to relations with Japan, during the meeting between President Trump and then Prime Minister Ishiba held in February 2025, the United States' unwavering commitment to the defense of Japan, including the Senkaku Islands, was confirmed.

See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1 (Strategic Promotion of Multilateral and Multilayered Defense Cooperation), Part I, Chapter 3, Section 3 (Relations between the United States and China, Etc.), Part III, Chapter 2, Section 1-3 (Policy Consultations between Japan and the United States), Part I, Chapter 3, Section 6-1 (Australia)

Regarding China's maritime expansion, in July 2020 the

7 Established in September 2021 and aimed at deepening diplomatic, security and defense cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

United States deployed two Carrier Strike Groups in the South China Sea for the first time in about six years and conducted naval exercises. Since then, the United States has continued Carrier Strike Group operations in the same region to demonstrate continuously its commitment to promote FOIP to allies in the region. In January 2022, the State Department released a study examining China's claims regarding its maritime rights in the South China Sea in light of international law. The study noted that China's claims over most of the South China Sea are inconsistent with international law and gravely undermine the rule of law in the ocean.

As part of its activities around strengthening its presence in the Indo-Pacific region, the U.S. Navy, which promotes Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO),[8] deployed the USS America, an amphibious assault ship with enhanced ability to carry F-35B fighter aircraft and other carrier-based aircraft to Sasebo in December 2019, and deployed for the first time the MQ-4C Triton unmanned maritime reconnaissance aircraft in Guam in January 2020. The U.S. Air Force promotes Agile Combat Employment (ACE)[9] and conducts ACE exercises in the Indo-Pacific region using fighter jets and unmanned aircraft. Furthermore, the U.S. Army promotes the multi-domain operation concept, and announced in September 2022 the deployment of a Multi-Domain Task Force[10] that conducts operations in all domains including human cognitive behavior parallelly, in Hawaii. The U.S. Marine Corps promotes Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations[11] (EABO) and deployed its first Marine Littoral Regiment (MLR) with capabilities to conduct EABO activities in Hawaii in March 2022. The 12th Marine Regiment stationed in Okinawa is currently being reorganized to the 12th MLR. Moreover, in the Japan-U.S. 2+2 held in July 2024, it was announced that through a phased approach the USFJ would be reconstituted as a joint force headquarters (JFHQ) reporting to USINDOPACOM. At the end of March 2025, the USFJ commenced its upgrade in alignment with the establishment of JSDF Joint Operations Command.

In addition, in March 2018, U.S. Forces brought the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson to Viet Nam, as the first U.S. aircraft carrier port call in Viet Nam in more than 40 years. In 2023, various U.S. strategic assets were frequently deployed[12] around the Korean Peninsula, including a strategic nuclear submarine having made its first port call in Korea in about 40 years.

The United States has continued to conduct Freedom of Navigation Operations in the South China Sea and U.S. Navy vessels and aircraft have passed through the Taiwan Strait to show the U.S. commitment to FOIP.

In contrast, while talks between the United States and North Korea have been conducted since their first summit meeting in history held in June 2018, no specific progress has been seen with regard to the dismantlement of North Korea's missiles and weapons of mass destruction. In the joint fact sheet summarizing the results of the U.S.-ROK Summit Meeting held in October 2025 (released in November of the same year), the United States reaffirmed its commitment to the defense of the ROK through the enduring presence of U.S. Forces Korea. At the same time, the ROK expressed its commitment to strengthening its military capabilities in order to take the lead in defending against North Korea using conventional forces, with support from U.S. Forces. The joint fact sheet also stated that as part of furthering the countries' maritime and nuclear partnership, the United States had approved the ROK's construction of nuclear-powered attack submarines and that the two countries would cooperate closely on their construction going forward.

The second Trump administration is continuing to demonstrate its commitment to FOIP, so it is necessary to collaborate closely with the United States in order to respond to the various issues in that region.

See Section 3-2-2 (South China Sea), 2-3 (Taiwan), Section 4-2-4 (U.S.-ROK Alliance and U.S. Forces Korea)

4 Innovation in the National Defense Field

In then President Biden's remarks in February 2021, the President, emphasizing the importance of technologies in national defense strategies, stated that the United States would deal with dangers and opportunities generated through emerging technologies, enhance its capabilities in cyberspace and lead in a new era of competition from deep sea to outer space.

The NSS issued by the second Trump administration states with regard to the importance of technology in the defense field that the United States will equip and field technologically advanced military forces and secure continued prosperity, competitive advantage, and military dominance for future generations through investment in emerging technologies and basic science. In addition, the NDS states that new technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), will be introduced as part of efforts to strengthen the defense industrial base. Attention will focus on how these initiatives are further developed going forward.

8 An operational concept that concentrates overwhelming combat power by dispersing each asset and integrating them through a network.
9 An operational concept aiming to rapidly deploy Air Force powers from dispersal airfields they have been located.
10 The Multi-Domain Task Force is an army unit with the mission of forward execution of the "multi-domain operational concept," an operational concept that aims to defeat the enemy's Anti-Access/Area-Denial (A2/AD) strategy by conducting operations in all domains (land, sea, air, space, cyber, electromagnetic spectrum, the information environment including cognitive aspects, etc.).
11 An operational concept that executes front-line operations by rapidly dispersing and deploying within the enemy's firepower zone and establishing temporary bases.
12 An ROK government official has said that U.S. strategic assets were deployed around the Korean Peninsula 17 times in 2023, a significant increase from the five-time deployments in 2022.

5 Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy

The NDS released by the second Trump administration refers to threats such as the nuclear forces of Russia and North Korea, and states that the United States will modernize and adapt its nuclear forces for homeland defense. It further states that while placing emphasis on deterrence and escalation management, the United States will never allow itself to be placed in a position vulnerable to nuclear blackmail.

As part of its nuclear deterrence strategy, the United States has long deployed a nuclear triad consisting of Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), strategic nuclear submarines equipped with Trident II D5 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and B-52 and B-2 strategic bombers equipped with nuclear cruise missiles and nuclear bombs. At the same time, because many of these systems have exceeded their design service lives, the United States has indicated its intention to proceed with replacement programs for all three legs of the triad.

In addition, the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) released by the former Biden administration outlined plans to shift the role of dual-capable aircraft (DCA) supporting NATO's nuclear posture from F-15E fighter aircraft to F-35A fighter aircraft. Moreover, the Missile Defense Review (MDR), also released by the former Biden administration, identified missile defense as a top priority for protecting the United States and deterring attacks, stating that it contributes to negating the benefits of enemy attacks and limiting damage even if deterrence fails. Also, the U.S. government declared that it would recognize attacks on any U.S. territory overseas including Guam as attacks directed at the U.S. homeland and stated that Guam is vital as an operation base to maintain FOIP and that defending Guam helps realize integrated deterrence.

Regarding the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty concluded with Russia, the United States withdrew from the treaty in August 2019 on the grounds that Russia was not complying with its obligations under the agreement. Following its withdrawal, the United States has proceeded with the development of conventionally armed ground-launched missiles with intermediate-range capability, the testing, production, and possession of which had been restricted under the treaty. In the same month, the United States conducted a launch test of a conventionally armed ground-launched missile with a range exceeding 500 km.

As for the U.S. Army's ground-launched mid-range missile system "Typhon," U.S. Forces conducted unilateral training at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni as part of the field training exercise "Resolute Dragon 25" with the U.S. Marine Corps in September 2025.[13]

President Putin stated in his annual presidential address to the Federal Assembly of Russia in February 2023 that the implementation of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), extended for five years in February 2021 based on the agreement between the United States and Russia, had been halted. Thereafter, in the latter half of 2025, President Putin stated that Russia would be prepared to continue observing the central numerical limits of the treaty for one year from February 2026 if the United States took similar action. President Trump initially responded that he thought it was a good idea, but in January 2026 stated that it would be fine if the treaty were to expire, and that the United States would simply conclude a better agreement. Subsequently, New START expired in February of the same year. President Trump has previously expressed his intention to pursue arms control involving China. Even after the expiration of New START he advocated multilateral dialogue on arms control and strategic stability. However, China has indicated that it does not intend to participate in U.S.-Russia nuclear arms reduction talks, arguing that the scale of its nuclear forces does not compare with those of the United States and Russia. Attention will focus on future developments regarding trilateral nuclear arms control involving the United States, Russia, and China.

See Section 11-3-1 (Nuclear Weapons)

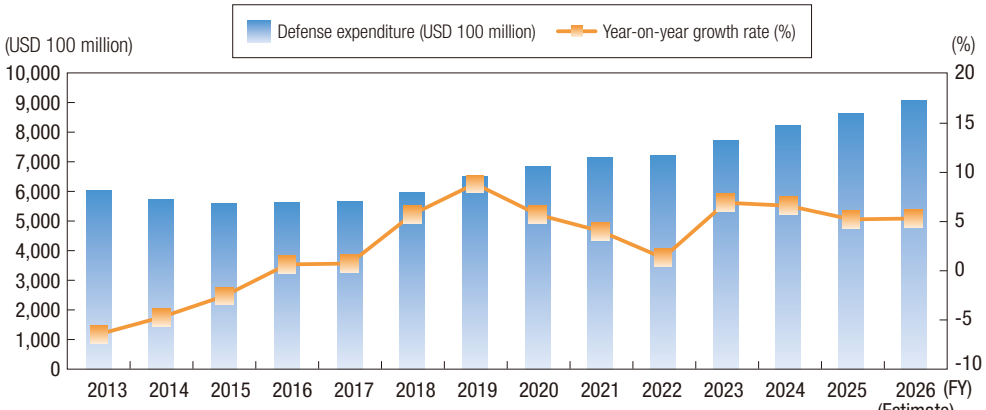
6 FY2027 U.S. Budget

On April 3, 2026, the U.S. government released its budget proposal, followed on April 21 by the publication of an overview of the Department of War's budget request. For the 2027 fiscal year, the U.S. budget proposal requests approximately USD 1.5 trillion for national defense, the largest amount ever requested, representing an increase of approximately 42% over the previous fiscal year. The budget request states that, while being aligned with the four major lines of effort set forth in the NDS, it prioritizes funding to continue the Secretary of War's efforts to (1) reestablish deterrence, (2) rebuild the U.S. military, and (3) restore the Warrior Ethos. Among the principal funding requests, the proposal allocates USD 756.8 billion, more than half of the total budget, to investments in new capabilities in order to rebuild and strengthen the defense industrial base, create jobs, and increase the procurement of defense equipment. It also calls for an investment of USD 18 billion to begin operationalizing the "Golden Dome" to protect the homeland.

See Fig. I-3-1-1 (Changes in the U.S. Department of Defense Budget)

13 The ground-launched mid-range missile system "Typhon" includes a mobile launcher capable of launching SM-6 missiles and Tomahawk cruise missiles from the ground. In addition to Typhon, development is ongoing for the Precision Strike Missile (PrSM), which is operated from the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), and the Dark Eagle system, which launches hypersonic missiles.

Fig. I-3-1-1 Changes in the U.S. Department of Defense Budget



(Note) Figures shown are the DoD budget outlays based on the Historical Tables. The amount for FY2026 is an estimate.

2 Military Posture

1 General Situation

The operation of the U.S. Forces is not controlled by the individual branches of the broader armed forces; rather it is operated under the command of the Unified Combatant Commands, composed of forces from multiple branches of the armed forces. In May 2018, the Cyber Force, which had been under the U.S. Strategic Command, was elevated to a unified combatant command and in August 2019, the Space Command was founded to serve as a geographic unified combatant command. The Unified Combatant Commands now consist of four functional combatant commands and seven geographic combatant commands. In December 2019, the Space Force was established as the sixth branch of the military within the Department of the Air Force.

The U.S. ground forces[14] have about 450,000 Army soldiers and about 170,000 Marines, which are forward-deployed in Germany, the ROK, and Japan, among other countries.

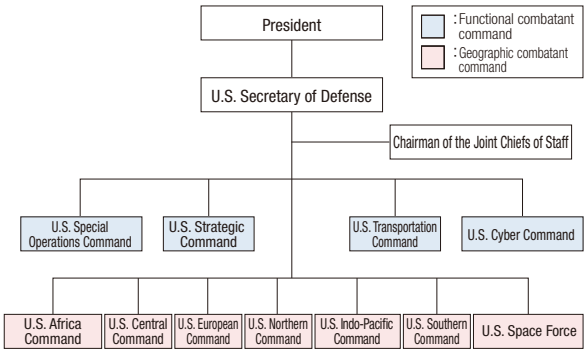
The U.S. maritime forces have about 970 vessels (including about 70 submarines) totaling about 6.50 million tons. The 7th Fleet is responsible for the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean; the 3rd Fleet in the eastern Pacific; the 4th Fleet in South America and the Caribbean Sea; the 2nd Fleet in U.S. East Coast, North Atlantic Ocean, and Arctic Ocean; the 6th Fleet in the Eastern Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, and Africa; and the 5th Fleet in the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the northwest Indian Ocean.

The U.S. air forces have roughly 3,200 combat aircraft across the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps. In addition to carrier-based aircraft deployed at sea, part of the tactical air force is forward-deployed in Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan and the ROK, among others.

In regard to strategic offensive weapons including nuclear force, the United States proceeded with its reduction based on the New START that came into force in February 2011. However, as noted above, the treaty expired in February 2026. The United States announced that its deployed strategic warheads[15] stood at 1,419, while its deployed delivery platforms stood at 662 as of May 1, 2023.

See Fig. I-3-1-2 (Structure of the Unified Combatant Command)

Fig. I-3-1-2 Structure of the Unified Combatant Command



14 The figures of the U.S. Forces mentioned in this paragraph are the numbers of active-duty military personnel recorded in the published sources of the U.S. DoW (as of December 2025) and could change according to unit deployment.

15 Warheads that have been equipped in deployed ICBMs and SLBMs and warheads equipped in deployed strategic bombers (a deployed strategic bomber is counted as one warhead) are covered.

2 Current Military Posture in the Indo-Pacific Region

The United States, a Pacific nation, continues to play an important role in ensuring the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region through USINDOPACOM,[16] a combatant command integrating the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force, in the region. USINDOPACOM is a geographic combatant command which is responsible for the largest geographical area and its subordinate unified commands include U.S. Forces Japan and U.S. Forces Korea.

USINDOPACOM consists of the U.S. Army Pacific, U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific, U.S. Pacific Air Forces, and U.S. Space Forces Indo-Pacific, all of which are headquartered in Hawaii.

The Army Pacific's subordinate commands include the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii, the 8th U.S. Army in the ROK, which is the Army component of the U.S. Forces Korea and the U.S. Army Alaska. Additionally, the Army Pacific assigns approximately 2,500 personnel to commands in Japan, such as I Corps (Forward) and the Headquarters, U.S. Army Japan Command.

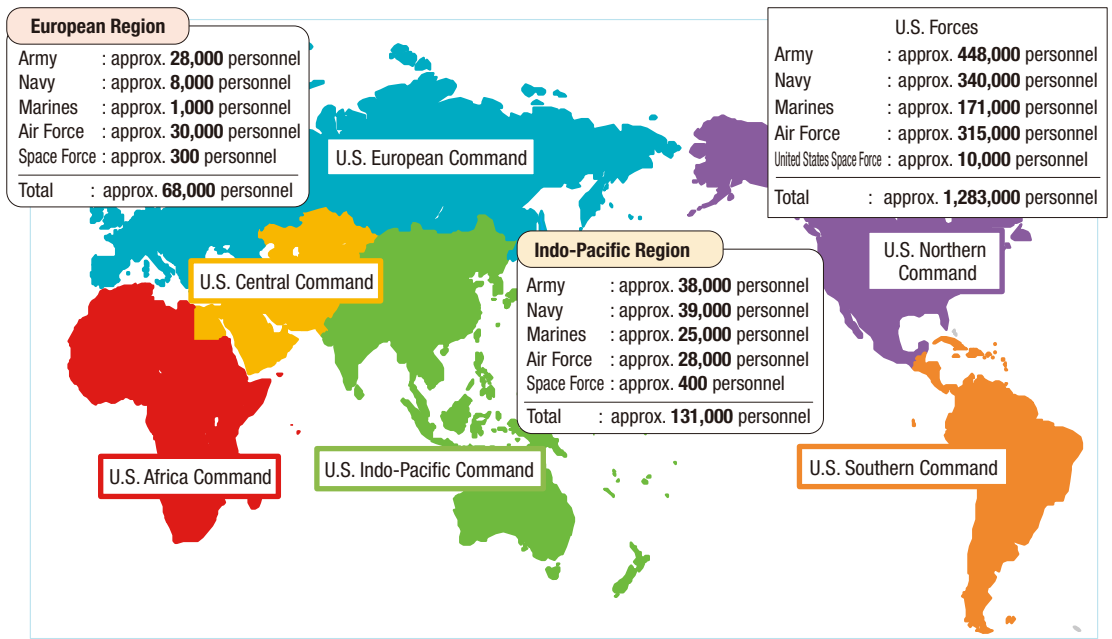
The U.S. Pacific Fleet consists of the 7th Fleet, which is responsible for the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean and the 3rd Fleet, responsible for the East Pacific and Bering Sea. The 7th Fleet mainly consists of a carrier strike group with main stationing locations in Japan and Guam. Their mission is to defend territorial lands, people, sea lines of communication, U.S. allies, and other critical national interests of the United States. An aircraft carrier, amphibious ships, and Aegis cruisers among others are assigned to the 7th Fleet.

The U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific deploys one Marine Expeditionary Force each in the U.S. homeland and Japan. Of this force, about 20,000 personnel are in the 3rd Marine Division, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, which employs F-35B fighter aircraft and other aircraft, and other divisions in Japan. In addition, the force deploys maritime pre-positioning ships loaded with heavy equipment and others in the Western Pacific.

The U.S. Pacific Air Force has three air forces, of which three air wings (equipped with F-16 fighter aircraft, C-130 transport aircraft and others) are deployed to the 5th Air Force stationed in Japan and two air wings (equipped with F-16 fighter aircraft) to the 7th Air Force stationed in the ROK. U.S. Space Forces Indo-Pacific has subordinate units stationed in Japan and the ROK, namely U.S. Space Forces – Japan and U.S. Space Forces – Korea.

See Fig. I-3-1-3 (U.S. Forces Deployment Status), Fig. I-3-1-4 (U.S. Engagements to the Indo-Pacific Region (image))

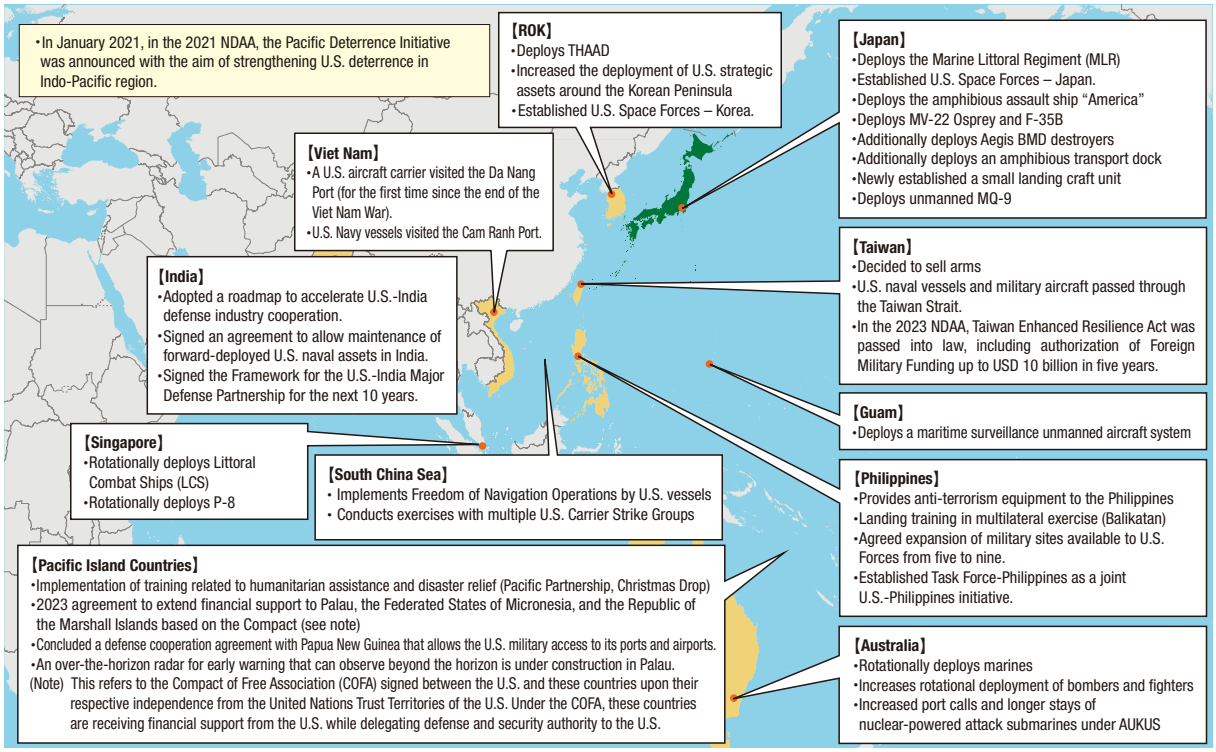
Fig. I-3-1-3 U.S. Forces Deployment Status



(Notes) 1 Source: Documents published by the U.S.DoW (as of December 31, 2025), etc.
2 Active-duty personnel from U.S. military services except for the Coast Guard are recorded. Individual sums do not add up to the total due to rounding.
3 The number of personnel in the Indo-Pacific region includes Hawaii, Guam, and other areas.
4 In June 2026, it was announced that the name of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command would be restored to U.S. Pacific Command.

16 In June 2026, it was announced that the name of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command would be restored to "U.S. Pacific Command."

Fig. I-3-1-4 U.S. Engagements to the Indo-Pacific Region (image)



Section 2 China

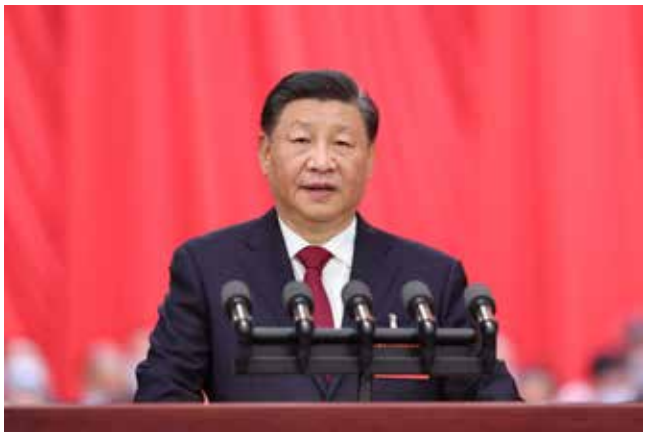
1 General Situation

China, the world's most populous country, has a vast landmass surrounded by a long borderline as well as a long coastline. It also has various races, religions, and languages. China's pride in its unique history of having shaped a distinct culture and civilization, and semi-colonial experience in and after the 19th century are driving its desire for a strong nation and fueling its nationalism.

Xi Jinping, the general secretary of the Central Committee (General Secretary Xi) in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), has established a power base in the CCP through actions such as purging leaders using an anti-corruption campaign. The concept of "Two Safeguards," meaning safeguarding the core status of General Secretary Xi in the CCP's Central Committee and party, and safeguarding the Committee's authority and centralized, unified leadership," was incorporated into the party's constitution at the 20th National Congress of the CCP (20th CCP Congress) held in October 2022. In addition, in the 1st Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee held immediately after the 20th CCP Congress, General Secretary Xi was reaffirmed for a third term.

In 2014, China presented the concept of a holistic approach to national security and established the National Security Commission of the Central Committee of the CCP. This was based on the idea that various areas are related to the country's security as a whole, including political, military, homeland, economic, cultural, societal, science and technology, cyber, ecological, resource, nuclear, overseas interests, outer space, deep sea, polar, and biological security. In addition to drawing up the National Security Strategy (2021–2025) and issuing a white paper titled "China's National Security in the New Era" (May 2025), China is advancing various legislation to strengthen the domestic counterintelligence system and bolster management of cyberspace.

China is also strongly opposed to any foreign intervention in the unification of China as well as any move toward the independence of Taiwan, and has repeatedly stated that although it will strive with utmost effort to realize a peaceful reunification, it will not promise to renounce the use of force. The Anti-Secession Law, enacted in March 2005, explicitly states non-renunciation of the use of force, specifying that, "In the event that the 'Taiwan independence' secessionist forces should act under any name or by any means to cause the fact of Taiwan's secession from China, or that major incidents entailing Taiwan's secession from China should occur, or that possibilities for a peaceful reunification should be completely exhausted, the state shall employ non-peaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity." In the revised party constitution adopted at the 20th CCP Congress, the phrase "the CCP resolutely opposes and deters separatists seeking 'Taiwan Independence'" was added, and blocking the independence of Taiwan was placed as a party duty.



General Secretary Xi Jinping giving a report at the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party
[China News Service/Jiji Press Photo]

China is facing various domestic problems. Among the problems emerging are the spread of corruption among the leadership of the CCP and disparities between urban and rural areas, coastal and inland regions, and within cities, as well as environmental pollution. The spread of corruption has also been seen in the military, with the removal of then Defense Minister Li Shangfu in October 2023, the expulsion from the party of He Weidong, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC),[1] Miao Hua, CMC Member and Director of the CMC Political Work Department, and other top military officials, in October 2025, the announcement in January 2026 that Zhang Youxia, CMC Vice Chairman, and Liu Zhenli, CMC Member and Chief of Staff of the CMC Joint Staff Department would be proved and investigated for serious discipline and law violations. Five out of the seven members who made up the CMC at the inauguration of the third Xi administration (October 2022) were expelled from the party or proved and investigated for suspected serious

1 The Central Military Commission is a leading and commanding organ to China's armed forces. Formally, there are the Chinese Communist Party CMC and the People's Republic of China CMC. However, each consists of the same members, indicating both commissions as an organ for the party to control the armed forces.

discipline and law violations, an extraordinary development. More recently, the pace of China's economic growth has slowed, and the country is also expected to face issues associated with the rapid aging of the population, including problems related to pensions and other aspects of the social security system. The range of factors potentially destabilizing government administration has thus been expanding and becoming increasingly diverse. Furthermore, the international community continues to be highly interested in human rights issues in China, such as in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, and the situation in Hong Kong.

2 Military Affairs

1 General Situation

For more than 30 years, China has sustained high-level growth of its defense budget without transparency, engaging in broad, rapid improvement of its military power in qualitative and quantitative terms with focus on nuclear, missile, naval, and air forces. China has also intensified its unilateral changes to the status quo by force or coercion and such attempts in the sea and airspace of waters, such as the East China Sea and South China Sea, including its incursions into Japan's territorial waters and airspace around the Senkaku Islands. China is also expanding and intensifying its military activities in waters such as the Sea of Japan and Pacific Ocean, which impact Japan's national security.

In strengthening its military capabilities, China has so far emphasized improving its ability to carry out practical joint operations by modernizing its military through military reforms and other measures.

China has also been placing emphasis on the "informatization" of its military, with the aim of improving the military's overall operational capability through the acquisition of information superiority and hindering the enemy's ability to demonstrate its military power. For example, it has been rapidly expanding its capabilities in the cyber domain, enabling it to disrupt enemy communications networks, and in the field of electromagnetic spectrum, which offers the potential to render enemy radar ineffective. In the space domain, China is also focusing on securing supremacy in new areas, including continuing to strengthen its capabilities to limit its enemies' use of space. Bolstering these capabilities will reinforce China's **"Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD)"** capabilities and lead to the establishment of operational capabilities further afield.

Additionally, China is building its Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities,[2] and is actively striving to develop and acquire cutting-edge technologies that can be used for military purposes. Such cutting-edge technologies include the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and other so-called game-changing technologies that will completely change the nature of future combat.

Along with this strengthening of its military power, China has expanded beyond the so-called the First Island Chain and into the Second Island Chain, including the East China Sea around the Senkaku Islands, the Sea of Japan, and even the Western Pacific, including around the Izu and Ogasawara Islands, intensifying activities in the entire area surrounding Japan. China is increasing military pressure on Taiwan and also promoting the militarization of disputed terrain in the South China Sea. Moreover, China is further strengthening its cooperation with Russia, including in military activities.

China's current external stance, military activities, and other activities have become a matter of serious concern for Japan and the international community, and present an unprecedented and the greatest strategic challenge in ensuring the peace and security of Japan and the peace and stability of the international community, as well as in strengthening the international order based on the rule of law, to which Japan should respond with its comprehensive national power including its defense capabilities and in cooperation and collaboration with its ally, like-minded countries, and others.

KEY WORD

Anti-Access/Area-Denial (A2/AD) Capabilities

The A2/AD capabilities represent a concept given by the United States. Anti-Access or A2 capabilities refer mainly to long-range capabilities to block adversaries from entering some operating zones. Area-Denial or AD capabilities refer to short-range capabilities to limit adversaries' freedom of action within operating zones.

2 Defense Policies

China is emphasizing the role of its military as a strategic pillar for achieving its goal of creating world-class military forces and the Chinese Dream, which is the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

In its defense white paper released in 2019, China stated

2 The report presented by General Secretary Xi Jinping at the 20th CCP Congress held in 2022 refers to strengthening and improving Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities, bolstering the capacity building in the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense (SASTIND), boosting the defense mobilization system and reserve army construction, thoroughly conducting security work and services for retired veterans, and solidifying and developing unity between the military and government, and the military and citizens.

the objective of its national defense policies to be protecting the sovereignty, security, and development interests of the state. These goals include protecting state interests overseas and supporting ongoing state development. It also stressed the idea of "active defense" as a military strategic policy, outlining a strategy of defense and advancement in operations and tactics.

Additionally, China has spoken of strengthening its military by building up national defense and a powerful military that are proportionate to the state's international standing and conform to state security and development interests. In combat, it emphasizes the ability to fight and win, discussing the acceleration of intelligentization, the enhancement of joint operational abilities, and the improvement of practical training standards. Such military buildup in China apparently indicates that China has given top priority to dealing with a Taiwan contingency by improving its capabilities to deter or deny Taiwan's independence and foreign military support for the Taiwanese independence and has recently considered the improvement of operational capabilities in more distant waters to protect its expanding overseas interests.

Furthermore, China seems to emphasize not only physical means but also non-physical means in military affairs and warfare. It regards the concept of "Three Warfare"—"Media Warfare," "Psychological Warfare," and "Legal Warfare"—as part of the political work of the military. In addition, China has set forth a policy of coordinating military struggle closely with political, diplomatic, economic, cultural, and legal endeavors.

As for the timeline for achieving the goals of the development of national defense and military forces, General Secretary Xi's report to the 19th CCP National Congress in October 2017 and the defense white paper released in 2019 noted that China would try to (1) fundamentally achieve mechanization and make great progress in informatization to dramatically improve strategic capabilities by 2020, (2) fundamentally complete the modernization of national defense and military forces by 2035, and (3) generally transform Chinese forces into world-class forces by the mid-21st century.

In the 5th Plenary Session held in October 2020, the goal year for the first stage mentioned above, China's determination to achieve a struggle goal for the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in 2027 was announced. The new "three-step development strategy" was stipulated in the so-called "historic resolution" in 6th Plenary Session in 2021, which consists of the achievement of the 100th anniversary struggle goal of the PLA by 2027 as the first step, and achievement of the aforementioned goals by 2035 and the mid-21st century as the second and third steps respectively.

Although China has not defined what it means by "world-class forces," it has been pointed out that China may be trying to develop military forces that equal or in some cases surpass the U.S. military. Furthermore, it has also been pointed out that China aims to build "world-class forces" capable of "intelligentized warfare" by acquiring advanced technology and becoming an "innovation superpower."[3] In light of this, it is suggested that China is planning to offset its military power gap with the U.S. military, and may recognize that the "intelligentization" of its forces is a necessary condition for this. It is thought that China will aim to build an army that can "fight and win a war" against the U.S. military in the "intelligentized warfare" of the future.[4]

Based on that recognition, it is expected that China will further accelerate the military modernization against the backdrop of national power development and General Secretary Xi's enhancement of his power base in the CCP in his third term and expansion of his power as Chairman of the CMC.

3 Transparency Concerning Defense Policies and Military Affairs

China has neither set out a clear and specific future vision of its military strengthening, nor ensured adequate transparency of its decision-making process in relation to military and security affairs. Although China had released a defense white paper roughly every two years since 1998, it has not released a defense white paper in recent years since "China's National Defense in the New Era" released in July 2019 for the first time in four years. Even the white paper did not sufficiently clarify the specific situation of equipment possession, procurement goals and results, the organization and deployment of major units, the military's major operations and training results, and the breakdown of the national defense expenditures.

Incidents in which Chinese authorities provide factually inaccurate explanations or refuse to admit facts regarding Chinese military activities have been confirmed, inciting concerns over China's military decision-making and actions. For example, the submerged transit of a Chinese Navy submarine through Japan's contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands was confirmed in January 2018, but China did not acknowledge this. In the same way, in the cases of submarines in the contiguous zone around Amami Oshima Island presumed to belong to China confirmed in June 2020 and September 2021, China did not acknowledge this fact. On the contrary, there were some Chinese media reports that criticized the Japanese side by claiming it was making exaggerations.

China's influence in the international community has risen politically, economically, and militarily. It has become increasingly important for China to improve its transparency

3 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2021)

4 There is a view that "intelligentization" of the military provides an excellent opportunity for a latecomer's military to leap ahead in development and thereby rapidly surpass other advanced-level militaries.

regarding defense policies and military affairs, provide fact-based explanations about its activities, and share and observe international rules as a responsible country in the international community to allay concerns about China. It is strongly hoped that China will increase transparency through such efforts as specific and accurate information disclosure.

4 Defense Budget

China announced that its national defense budget for FY2026 was approximately RMB 1,909.561 billion (approximately 40,100.8 billion yen when the value is mechanically converted at 21 yen per RMB).[5] This is around 7% growth from the budget of the previous fiscal year according to China's announcement. China's announced defense budget has been increasing at a rapid pace, and the nominal size of China's announced defense budget has increased approximately 27 times in the three decades since FY1996, and approximately two times in the decade since FY2016.

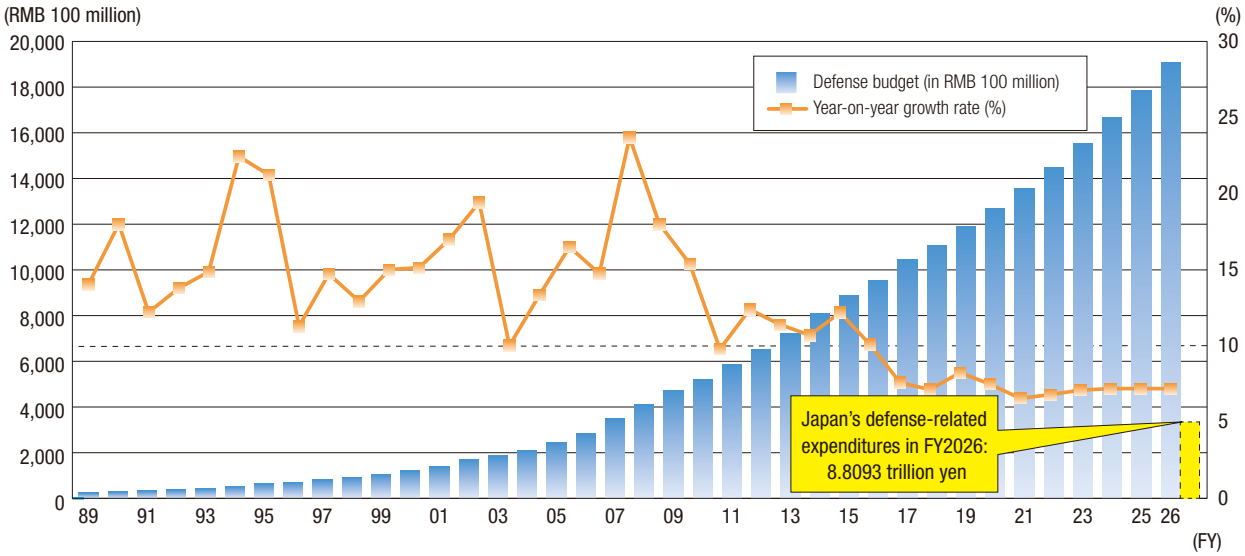
China positions the buildup of defense capabilities as important a task as economic development. It is believed that China has continued to invest resources in the improvement of its defense capabilities in tandem with its economic development. However, there have been many years in which the announced annual national defense budget increase rate exceeded the economic growth rate (an increase in gross domestic product [GDP]). Attention is to be paid to how the slowdown in China's economic growth would affect its defense budget.

In addition, the amount of the released defense budget is considered to be only a part of its actual military expenditures. For example, it is believed that the released defense budget does not include foreign equipment procurement costs or research and development expenditures. According to an analysis of the U.S. Department of War, actual defense spending was significantly higher than the announced national defense budget.[6]

As for a breakdown of the national defense budget, past defense white papers specified personnel, training and sustainment, and equipment expenses for the announced national defense budget for FY2007, FY2009 and FY2010-2017 (and expenses for active, reserve and militia forces for FY2007 and FY2009). However, no more details have been given.

See Fig. I-3-2-1 (Changes in China's Announced Defense Budget)

Fig. I-3-2-1 Changes in China's Announced Defense Budget



(Note) This basically shows the defense budget within "the central government's general public budget," which had been named as "the central fiscal expenditures" prior to FY2014. Year-on-year growth rate compares the budget of a given year against the initial budget of the previous year. Note that the FY2002 defense budget was calculated based on the increased amount from the defense budget in the previous FY because only the amount and rate of growth were released. For FY2016 and FY2018-2026, the amounts of "the central government expenditures," which are part of the central government's general public budget, are used because they were the only announced amounts. Figures for year-on-year growth rate include figures announced by China.

5 The announced defense budget of China is rapidly increasing. The budget of FY2026 is about 4.6 times larger than defense-related expenditures of Japan. Japan's defense-related expenditures increased to approximately 1.8 times the level around 30 years ago.

6 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2025)

5 Military Posture

China's armed forces are composed of the PLA, the People's Armed Police Force (PAP), and the militia. It is provided that these bodies be instructed and commanded by the CMC. The PLA is defined as a people's force created and led by the CCP, and comprises the Army (PLAA), Navy (PLAN), Air Force (PLAAF), Rocket Force (PLARF), Aerospace Force, Cyberspace Force, Information Support Force, and Joint Logistics Support Force (PLAJLSF), an integrated logistical support force.

In September 2025, the military parade for 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" was held. The parade showcased a variety of nuclear capabilities, including intercontinental ballistic missiles, to demonstrate China's strengthened nuclear deterrence. It also displayed several anti-ship missiles, including hypersonic missiles that are considered difficult to counter, to demonstrate long-range anti-ship attack capabilities, thereby showcasing the achievements of the military's modernization to both domestic and international audiences.

The PAP is designed to engage mainly in patrol, emergency response, counterterrorism, maritime rights protection and law enforcement, emergency rescue, defense operations, etc. The militia is planned to engage in economic construction, etc., in peacetime and undertake logistic support missions in an emergency.

(1) Military Reform

In recent years, China is said to have been engaged in military reforms seen as the largest in its history.

China is also said to have largely completed central military reforms by the end of 2016. Specifically, they abolished the PLA's seven Military Regions and created five new Theaters with primary responsibility for command of operations, namely, the Eastern Theater, Southern Theater, Western Theater, Northern Theater, and Central Theater. They also formed the PLAA Headquarters, ranked equally with the PLAN and PLAAF Headquarters, the PLARF, the then Strategic Support Force (PLASSF), and the PLAJLSF. Moreover, the headquarters for the entire PLA was replaced by 15 functional sections under the CMC, including the Joint Staff Department, Political Work Department, Logistics Support Department (supply), and Equipment Development Department.

On the other hand, there are also moves to reorganize the central-level organizations. In April 2024, the Information Support Force, a new branch, was created and the previous PLASSF was discontinued. In association with this, the Aerospace Force and Cyberspace Force, both of which had been under PLASSF, were reorganized into military branches.

General Secretary Xi regards strengthening joint operational capabilities as important, and these series of reforms are believed to be aimed at building a more combat-ready military. In addition, it has been noted that the reorganization of the headquarters is a means of tackling corruption at the center of the military. Given these points, it is thought that General Secretary Xi is attempting to further enhance his leadership in the CMC and the military.

(2) Nuclear and Missile Forces

China has continued independent efforts to develop nuclear weapons and missiles for their delivery since the mid-1950s, indicating its apparent attempt to ensure nuclear deterrence, supplement its conventional forces with nuclear capabilities and secure its influence on the international community.

It is regarded that China's nuclear strategy is to deter any nuclear attack on its territory by maintaining a nuclear force structure able to conduct retaliatory nuclear attacks on a limited number of targets such as cities in adversary countries, should China be subject to nuclear attacks. China has explained that it is committed to "no first use" of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, to "unconditional negative security assurance" that it would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones unconditionally, and to keeping its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security. In recent years, however, doubts have been expressed about the explanation.[7]

China is aiming to modernize, diversify, and expand its nuclear capabilities. It is increasing production of nuclear warheads and investing in the means to deliver nuclear weapons by land, sea, and air to increase their numbers. The number of operational nuclear warheads in its possession remained in the low 600s through 2024, and it has been pointed out that it may remains on track to have over 1,000 by 2030.[8] It is believed that China plans to strengthen deterrence against the United States and will continue to place importance on nuclear and missile capabilities.

China possesses ballistic missiles of various types and ranges, including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), air-launched ballistic missiles (ALBMs), intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs), and short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs). The update of China's ballistic missile forces from a liquid propellant system to a solid propellant system is improving their survivability and readiness. Moreover, it is believed that China is working to increase their performance by such means as extending ranges, improving targeting accuracy, and employing maneuverable reentry vehicles (MaRVs) and multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs).

7 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2025)
8 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2025)

DF-41 Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)



DF-41 intercontinental ballistic missile [Imaginechina/Jiji Press Photo]

[Specifications, performance]
Maximum firing range:
11,200 km

[Description]
New intercontinental-range ballistic missile showcased for the first time at the military parade commemorating the 70th anniversary of China's founding in October 2019. Viewed as capable of carrying up to three multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) and having highly accurate attack capabilities.

JL-2 Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBM)



JL-2 submarine-launched ballistic missiles [Avalon/Jiji Press Photo]

[Specifications, performance]
Maximum firing range:
7,200 km

[Description]
Submarine-launched ballistic missiles viewed as strategic nuclear forces of the Chinese Navy. It is pointed out that China is developing and deploying JL-3 SLBMs (maximum range 10,000 km) with extended ranges for further strengthening strategic nuclear forces.

China's main ICBMs, its strategic nuclear asset, had been the fixed-site liquid-propellant DF-5 missiles. Recently, China has been deploying mobile DF-31 with a solid propellant system and mounted onto a transporter-erector-launcher (TEL) and **DF-41**, which is said to have a range of approximately 11,200 km and to be capable of carrying up to three warheads. Furthermore, the DF-61, a new mobile ICBM, was showcased for the first time at a military parade in September 2025. China is also building ICBM silos and is reported to have constructed three new launch facilities in 2022, including more than 300 new silos.[9] It has also been pointed out that China is pursuing the development of a missile system equipped with a conventional warhead that has intercontinental range to enable it to threaten the U.S. mainland with conventional forces.[10] In September 2024, China announced it had launched an ICBM loaded with a dummy warhead over the Pacific Ocean during a training exercise. That was the first time in 44 years since 1980 that China had launched an ICBM over the Pacific Ocean.



Image released by China when the ICBM was launched (September 2024) [AFP-Jiji]

With regard to SLBMs, it is considered that Jin-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) equipped with **JL-2** with an estimated range of approximately 7,200 km are operational. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that JL-3, reportedly with a range of 10,000 km, has already been loaded into the Jing-class SSBNs, which appeared in the military parade in September 2025, making it possible for them to reach the mainland United States from China's coastal waters.[11]

Regarding ALBMs, the JL-1, which is reported to be capable of carrying nuclear warheads, was showcased for the first time at the military parade in September of the same year, and in addition China possesses the YJ-21 which is reportedly able to attack land and sea targets using conventional warheads.

China's missile forces have been put outside the framework of the U.S.-Russia Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and China holds numerous amounts of ground-launched missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 km that had been subjected to the INF Treaty. It is also

DF-17 Medium Range Ballistic Missile (MRBM)



DF-17 medium range ballistic missiles viewed as being capable of carrying a hypersonic glide vehicle [Avalon/Jiji Press Photo]

[Specifications, performance]
Maximum firing range:
2,000 km

[Description]
Medium-range ballistic missiles viewed as having been developed based on DF-16 SRBMs and as being capable of carrying an HGV. Showcased for the first time at the military parade commemorating the 70th anniversary of China's founding in October 2019.

9 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)
10 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)
11 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)

deemed that China is ahead of the United States in relation to ground-launched ballistic missiles and cruise missiles.[12] As for the IRBMs/MRBMs capable of reaching the Indo-Pacific region including Japan, China possesses the mobile solid propellant DF-21 and DF-26, which can be transported and operated on TELs. These are viewed as capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads. Furthermore, DF-21D anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs), called "carrier killers," have been deployed, which carry conventional warheads to attack overwater ships including aircraft carriers. In recent years, the DF-26, which has a range including Guam and is called "Guam killer," is considered a "second-generation ASBM" developed on the basis of the DF-21D. Its deployment was announced in April 2018. In addition to these ground-launched missiles, development and operation of ASBMs and long-range cruise missiles which can be launched from aircraft and ships is also under way. Specifically, regarding ASBMs, China possesses the YJ-21, an air-launched ballistic missile that can reportedly attack land and sea targets. In addition, at the military parade in September 2025, it showcased for the first time the YJ-20, a ship-launched anti-ship ballistic missile.

Furthermore, the long-range cruise missiles it possesses include, for example, the air-launched missile CJ-20, a land-attack cruise missile with a long range over 1,500 km which reportedly can be carried by an H-6 bomber, and ship-launched missiles such as long-range land-attack cruise missiles and YJ-18, an anti-ship cruise missile which can strike targets at supersonic speed. It is deemed that these missiles can complement ballistic missile forces, covering the Indo-Pacific region including Japan. The deployment of these ASBMs and cruise missiles is expected to strengthen China's A2/AD capabilities.

Concerning SRBMs, China has deployed a large number of solid fuel-propelled DF-16, DF-15, and DF-11 missiles facing Taiwan. It is believed that their ranges cover a part of Japan's Southwestern Islands including the Senkaku Islands.

Furthermore, China is believed to be rapidly developing multiple models of hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs) and hypersonic cruise missiles (HCMs) to acquire striking power capable of penetrating missile defenses. Specifically, it has been pointed out that China began operation of the **DF-17**, which is reported to be an MRBM capable of carrying HGVs, in 2020, and that some older SRBMs may be replaced by the DF-17, and in addition it has been pointed out that the DF-27, which is reported to be a long-range ballistic missile capable of carrying HGVs, may have been deployed.[13] Furthermore, China conducted its first orbital launch of an ICBM carrying an HGV in July 2021. The vehicle reportedly flew approximately 40,000 km in over 100 minutes, and did not strike its target, but came close.[14] Moreover, at the military parade in September 2025, in addition to CJ-1000, which is said to be an HCM, ship-launched missiles YJ-17, said to be an HGV, and YJ-19, said to be an HCM, were showcased for the first time. These weapons are said to be more difficult for missiles to intercept because they fly at very high speeds and are highly maneuverable.

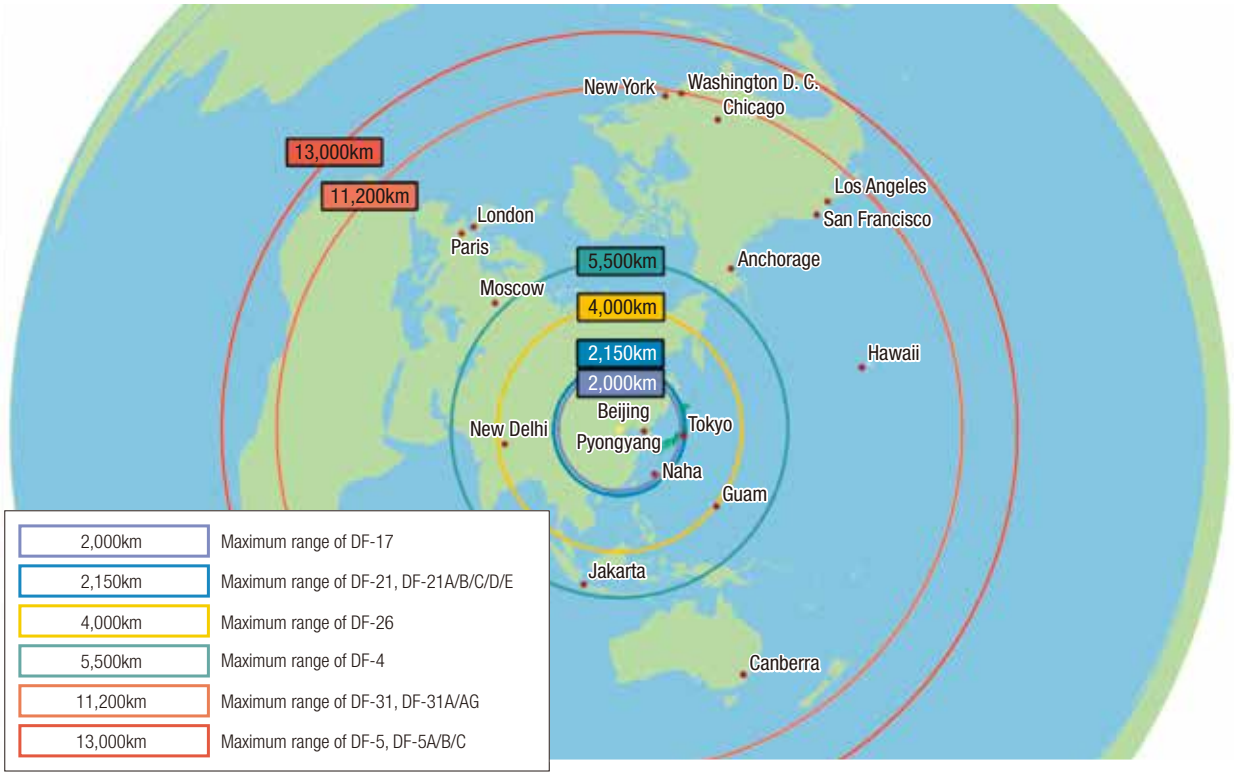
China is working on the construction of missile defense systems, and for its ballistic missile defense system it is believed to be focusing its efforts on the development of related technologies such as the HQ-19, which is said to be responsible for responding to ballistic missiles at the terminal phase, and the HQ-29, which is said to be responsible for responding to ballistic missiles at the mid-course phase and was unveiled for the first time at the military parade in September 2025.

China's cooperation with Russia has also been noted. In May 2019, two surface-to-air missile systems "S-400s" introduced from Russia were deployed near Beijing. In October of the same year, Russian President Putin stated that Russia was helping China build a "missile-attack early warning system." Furthermore, in December 2025, China announced that its third joint anti missile exercise had been conducted. Given that ballistic missile defense technology has the potential to be applied to missiles capable of destroying satellites, attention will focus on future Chinese missile defense trends.

See Fig. I-3-2-2 (Range of Ballistic Missiles from China (Beijing) (image)), Fig. I-3-2-3 (Changes in the Number of China's Ground-Launched Ballistic Missile Launchers)

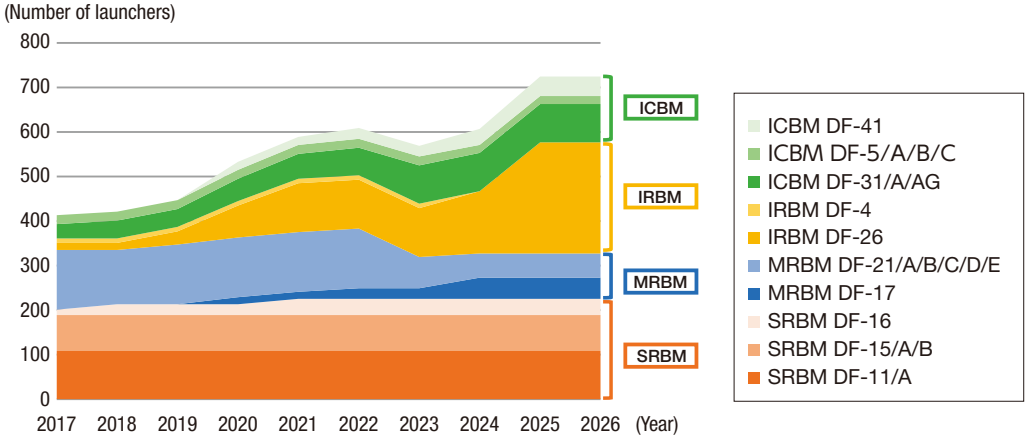
12 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2020)
13 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)
14 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)

Fig. I-3-2-2 Range of Ballistic Missiles from China (Beijing) (image)



(Note) The figure above is for illustrative purpose, showing the range of each missile from Beijing.

Fig. I-3-2-3 Changes in the Number of China's Ground-Launched Ballistic Missile Launchers

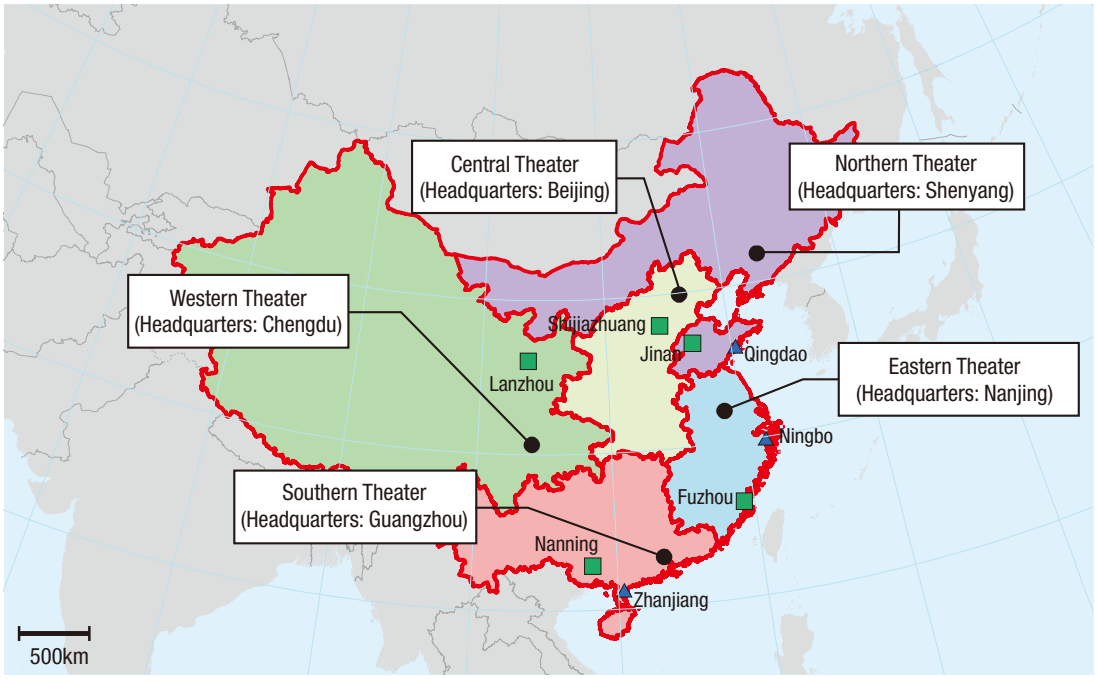


(Notes) 1 The numbers of launchers, missiles, and warheads of ballistic missiles possessed by China are not publicized.
2 This data classifies the number of launchers possessed by China into ICBM, IRBM, MRBM, and SRBM according to the general standard based on "The Military Balance" of each year.

(3) Ground Forces

China has the third largest ground forces in the world, following India and North Korea, with approximately 950,000 personnel. China has sought to improve the operational capabilities of ground forces pursuing the downsizing, multifunctionality, and modularization of military units. Specifically, it is believed to be shifting from a regional defense type to a region-wide mobility type and is improving mobility by motorizing and

Fig. I-3-2-4 Deployment of the People's Liberation Army (image)



(Notes) 1 ●Theater headquarters ■Theater Army organization ▲Theater Navy headquarters
2 Theater boundaries have not been officially announced. The above map is prepared based on U.S. DoD reports, media reports, etc.

mechanizing infantry units, as well as strengthening airborne units of the Air Force, amphibious units of the Army and Navy, special forces, and helicopter units.

It is said that the Navy Marine Corps is still in the process of reinforcement. It is reportedly acquiring equipment and conducting training necessary to become an expeditionary force. On the other hand, it repeatedly conducts training for amphibious warfare including using private Ro-Ro ships.[15] It is also pointed out that these activities suggest that Navy Marine Corps troops are to be flexibly utilized in multiple roles in the scenario of the Taiwan affair.[16]

The Chinese Army is reportedly conducting trainings that focus on combined combat operations and incorporating mock confrontation drills to improve its ability to conduct practical operations. China has conducted on a regular basis Stride, Firepower, and Sharp Sword maneuver-exercises that cut across multiple regions. They are aiming at verifying and improving the capabilities necessary to deploy army troops to remote areas, such as long-distance maneuvering capabilities of the Army, and logistical support capabilities that include mobilizing militias and public transportation. These facts suggest China's attempt to improve its practical operational capabilities.

The PAP, one of China's armed forces other than the military, consists of internal security corps, which are organized and established based on administrative divisions such as provinces and autonomous regions, mobile corps, which do not have fixed areas in charge and perform missions across different areas, and the China Coast Guard (CCG), which is said to safeguard national sovereignty, security, and maritime interests as well as implement law enforcement, and the PAP is said to own various equipment such as armored vehicles, rotary-wing aircraft, and heavy machine guns. Furthermore, it is reported that the PAP focuses on maintaining internal security and joint operations with the PLA, and is developing capabilities for readiness, mobility and counter-terrorism operations.[17]

See Fig. I-3-2-4 (Deployment of the People's Liberation Army (image))

(4) Naval Forces

The naval forces consist of three fleets: North Sea Fleet, East Sea Fleet, and South Sea Fleet. The Chinese Navy is rapidly modernizing, increasing production of surface combatant vessels such as the Jankai II-class frigates, which are highly

15 Roll-on-Roll-off ships. Generally, ships to which vehicles loaded with cargo are driven aboard on their own wheels, that can be transported with cargo.
16 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2022)
17 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoW (2025)

capable of fleet air defense and anti-ship attack, and the Renhai-class destroyers, which are the largest in the Chinese Navy, and domestically produced Yuan class-submarines, which have their strength on quietness, as well as reinforcing landing ships and aircraft carriers.

The Renhai-class destroyer is said to be equipped with a vertical launch system (VLS) with 112 launch cells, almost twice the number of launch cells as the new Luyang III-class destroyer. This VLS is said to be capable of launching long-range land-attack cruise missiles and YJ-18 anti-ship cruise missiles with a supersonic terminal attack capability, as well as YJ-20 ship-launched ASBMs. It has also been pointed out that the destroyer is being considered as a launch vehicle to defend against ballistic missiles in the mid-course phase,[18] and that this suggests a plan for carrying anti-ship HGVs. At least eight Renhai-class destroyers have been in service, and they may become the key to the Chinese Navy's long-range missile capabilities in the future.

As for landing ships, large Yusheng-class landing ships have been launched and commissioned one after another, and the fourth ship of the class was commissioned in August 2025. Furthermore, the amphibious assault ship Sichuan, the first ship of the new Yulan-class that succeeds the Yushen-class, was launched in December 2024, and it carried out sea trials in November 2025. The Yulan-class amphibious assault ship is reputedly equipped with an electromagnetic catapult, and capable of additional attack and ISR capabilities using drones and fixed-wing, carrier-based aircraft.

Furthermore, China currently possesses three aircraft carriers. China's first aircraft carrier Liaoning, second aircraft carrier Shandong[19] (its first domestically produced aircraft carrier), and third aircraft carrier **Fujian** were commissioned in September 2012, December 2019, and November 2025, respectively. Fujian is believed to be larger than the Liaoning and Shandong, and equipped with an electromagnetic catapult system capable of operating fixed-wing, early warning aircraft. This has been highlighted as improving the operational capabilities of the carrier-based aircraft. It has also been pointed out that China has plans to build nuclear-powered aircraft carriers.

China is believed to have been developing and deploying unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) and unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) that are available for military purposes. Such equipment is considered an asymmetric force that is relatively inexpensive, yet capable of interfering with the enemy's ability to gain superiority at sea and in the water.

Given these developments concerning the naval forces, China appears to be steadily building up capabilities for conducting operations in more distant waters in addition to near sea defense. It has also been noted that in the near future the Chinese Navy will have the capability to make long-range precision strikes against land targets using land-attack cruise missiles from submarines and surface combatant ships, and that the anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capabilities of surface combatants, as well as fixed and rotary wing aircraft, have significantly improved, although robust deep-water ASW capability is lacking.[20] Ongoing monitoring of related developments is needed.

The PAP has the CCG, which is said to be the world's largest maritime law enforcement agency, under its umbrella. In recent years, efforts have been made to increase the size and armament of its vessels. At the end of December 2025, the CCG possessed 175 ships with full load displacement of 1,000 tons or more,[21] including two 10,000-ton-class patrol ships that are among the world's largest. Operations of vessels equipped with artillery have also been observed. The newer ships are significantly larger and more capable than older ships, and most of them are equipped with helicopter facilities, high-capacity water cannons, guns ranging from 20 mm to 76 mm, and other equipment, so it is pointed out that they are able to withstand long-term operations and engage in distant-water activities.[22]

The enhanced cooperation between the military and the CCG has also been confirmed. In July 2018, the CCG, which had been conducting maritime surveillance operations under the direction of the State Council's Ministry of Public Security, was transferred to the PAP as the PAP Coast Guard and is currently operated under the PAP, which receives unified guidance and command from the CMC. After the transfer, former naval officers were given major CCG posts, including its top position, indicating enhanced cooperation between the PLA and CCG from both organizational and personnel

Aircraft carrier "Fujian"

[Specifications, performance]
Full-load displacement:
Over 80,000 tons
Speed: 30 knots (approximately 56 km/h)
Number of aircraft:
60-70, including J-15 fighter aircraft, KJ-600 early warning aircraft, and others



China's third aircraft carrier Fujian commissioned in Hainan Province in November 2025 [China News Service/Jiji Press Photo]

[Description]
China's second domestically built aircraft carrier. It is thought to be equipped with an electromagnetic catapult.

18 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)
19 The "Shandong" is a ski-jump type aircraft carrier that is said to be an improved version of the "Liaoning," and it has been pointed out that it can accommodate increased number of aircraft on board.
20 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)
21 According to "Japan Coast Guard Annual Report 2026," the Japan Coast Guard
22 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)

perspectives. It has been noted that retired naval destroyers and frigates were delivered to the CCG, suggesting that the military has been supporting the CCG in terms of equipment as well. It has also been noted that the PLA and CCG are conducting joint navigation and training. The enhanced cooperation between the PLA and PAP, including the CCG, is believed to be intended to strengthen operational capabilities in gray-zone situations.

Amid such a situation, in June 2020, Law of the People's Republic of China on the People's Armed Police (PAP Law) was revised, and "protection of maritime interests and law enforcement" were added to the duties of the PAP. The revised version also stipulates that the PAP shall be centrally and uniformly guided by the Central Committee and the CMC of the People's Republic of China. The Coast Guard Law of the People's Republic of China (CCG Law), which stipulates the CCG's responsibilities and authority including the use of weapons, was newly enacted in January 2021 and entered into force in February 2021. In June 2024, procedural regulations also came into effect for the execution of the CCG Headquarters' administrative laws, which prescribe details of law enforcement by the CCG. The CCG Law includes problematic provisions—such as vague definitions of applicable maritime areas and the authority to use weapons—that are seen as inconsistent with international law. The CCG Law must not be allowed to infringe on the legitimate interests of the relevant countries including Japan. Furthermore, it is completely unacceptable that the law would increase tensions in maritime areas such as the East China Sea.

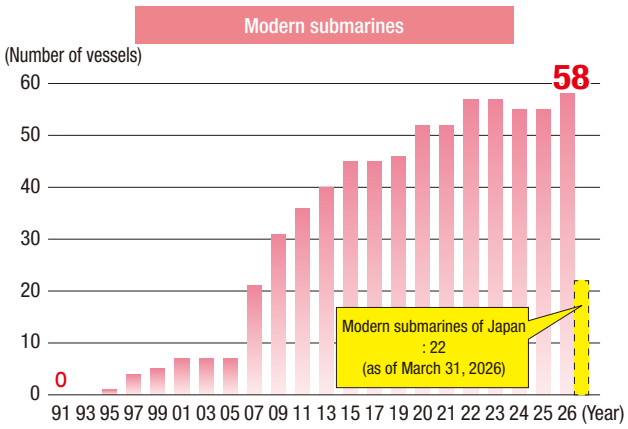
It is pointed out that, among the militia, whose status is China's armed force other than the military, the so-called maritime militia is playing the role of the front guard for supporting China's maritime interests. The maritime militia is said to operate in the East China Sea, South China Sea, and elsewhere, and consist of fishermen and residents of isolated islands.[23]

It has been pointed out that the maritime militia operates under military command and undertakes a range of missions. These reportedly include maritime operational missions such as information gathering and logistics support, as well as obstructing the movements of adversary vessels by massing large numbers of fishing boats. It is also pointed out that fishing vessels belonging to the maritime militia are equipped with China's domestically developed global satellite positioning system, BeiDou. Through this system, it has been pointed out that the military and the CCG are able to conduct maritime operations in coordination with the maritime militia, including tracking the maritime militia's position and exchanging messages with it. Given the China's emphasis on the necessity of "fully exerting the overall power of the military, police and militia" on the seas, attention should be paid to these asymmetrical forces, too.

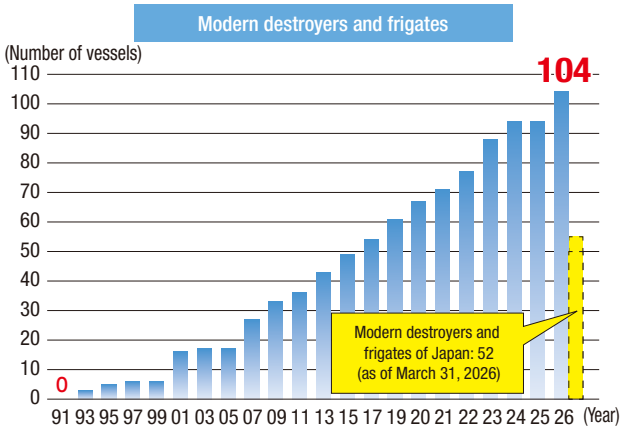
See Fig. I-3-2-5 (China's Main Maritime Forces), Fig. I-3-2-6 (The Coast Guard's Transfer to the PAP), Fig. I-3-2-7 (Buildup of China Coast Guard Vessels, Etc.)

23 In addition, it is pointed out that while the maritime militia often rents fishing vessels from companies or individual fishermen, China has built a state-owned fishing fleet in the South China Sea for the maritime militia. It is also pointed out that the Hainan provincial government, adjacent to the South China Sea, ordered the building of 84 large militia fishing vessels with reinforced hulls and ammunition storage, which the militia received by the end of 2016, along with extensive subsidies to encourage frequent operations in the Spratly Islands. Since this maritime militia unit recruits military veterans as its members to create a unit on par with a career soldier unit, it is reported that salary is paid separately from its commercial fishing activities.

Fig. I-3-2-5 China's Main Maritime Forces

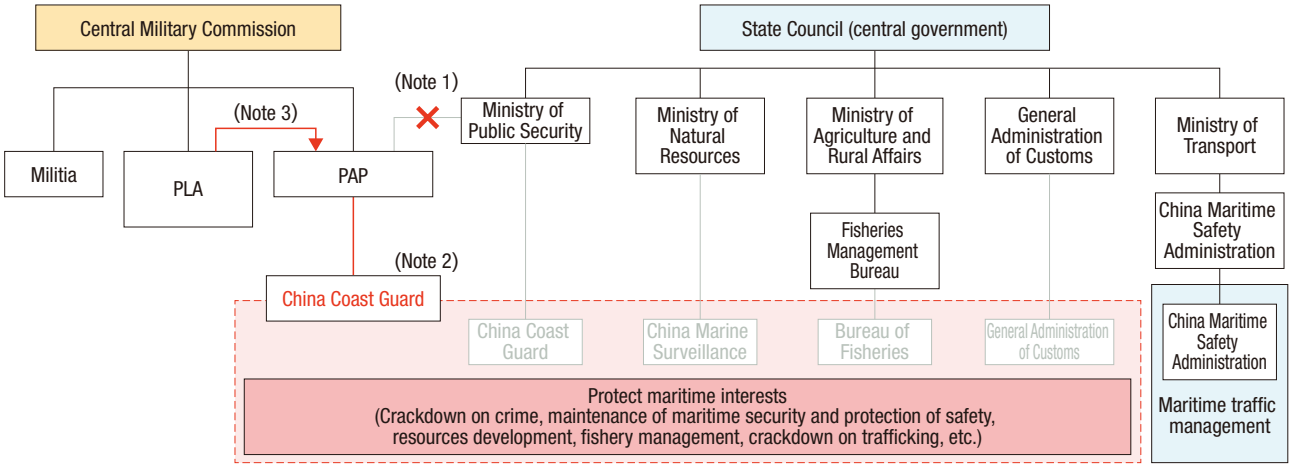


(Note) Total number of Jin-class, Shang-class, Song-class, Yuan-class and Kilo-class submarines



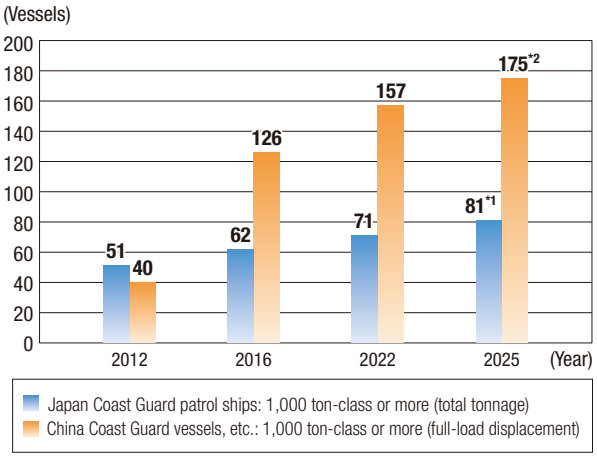
(Notes) 1 Total number of Renhai-class, Luhu-class, Luhai-class, Sovremenny-class, Luyang-class and Luzhou-class destroyers, and Jiangwei-class and Jiangkai-class frigates.
2 Additionally, China has 50 Jiangdao-class corvettes (in 2026).

Fig. I-3-2-6 The Coast Guard's Transfer to the PAP



(Notes) 1 Unification of PAP leadership and command system (January 1, 2018)
2 Transfer of the Coast Guard to the PAP (July 1, 2018)
3 The amendment to the People's Armed Police Law (June 21, 2020)
→ In emergency situations, the Central Military Commission, or else the military of the Theater Commands, can issue orders to the divisions of the People's Armed Police Force (PAP)
4 Units enclosed by a red dotted line belonged to the China Coast Guard before the realignment (2013)

Fig. I-3-2-7 Buildup of China Coast Guard Vessels, Etc.



(Notes) 1 Number of ships as of the end of each fiscal year
2 Number of vessels as of December 31 of each year; Estimation based on publicized information (may be altered in the future)
*1 According to "Japan Coast Guard Annual Report 2026," the Japan Coast Guard

(5) Air Forces

China's air forces consist mainly of the Air Force and Navy's air units. As for modern fourth-generation fighter aircraft, China has introduced from Russia the Su-27 and Su-30 and the Su-35, a latest fourth-generation fighter aircraft. China is also developing its own domestic modern fighter aircraft. China has started the mass production of the J-11B fighter aircraft, a suspected copy of the Su-27, and the J-16 fighter aircraft, a suspected copy of the Su-30, as well as the domestic J-10 fighter aircraft. The J-15 carrier-based fighter aircraft, which are also carried on the aircraft carriers Liaoning and Shandong, are said to have been copied from the Russian Su-33. The J-15T, which can be launched using the catapult installed on the third aircraft carrier Fujian, was exhibited for the first time in 2024 at the 15th Zhuhai Airshow. China is deploying **J-20 fifth-generation fighter aircraft** and developing J-35 fighter aircraft. Note that the Air Force version of the J-35 fighter aircraft was unveiled for the first time at the China International Aviation & Aerospace Exhibition in 2024, and in addition its Navy version, which is believed to be capable of operating with an electromagnetic catapult, was unveiled for the first time at the military parade in September 2025.

As China is continuing the modernization of its bombers as well, the Air Force has increased the number of **H-6 bombers**, which are capable of carrying long-range land-attack cruise missiles. In an attempt to improve bombers' long-range operation capabilities, the Air Force has reportedly begun to operate H-6N bombers that can take advantage of aerial refueling to fly longer. It is believed to be developing a new long-range stealth bomber called H-20. It is also pointed out that China is developing an ALBM with nuclear capability to be carried by such bombers, and the JL-1, an ALBM said to be capable of carrying nuclear warheads, was showcased for the first time at the military parade in September 2025.

China is also making continuous efforts to improve capabilities which are essential for operations of modern air power by introducing H-6U and IL-78M aerial refueling tankers and KJ-500 and KJ-2000 early warning and control aircraft. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that the KJ-600 early warning aircraft has been deployed aboard the aircraft carrier Fujian, and it is said to have contributed to the improvement of the operational capabilities of the carrier-based aircraft. Moreover, since July 2016, China has promoted the deployment of the indigenously developed Y-20 large transport aircraft. The Y-20U, an aerial refueling tanker based on this transport aircraft, has also been deployed since June 2021.

China is rapidly developing a variety of domestic unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), including high-altitude, long-endurance (HALE) UAVs for reconnaissance and other purposes as well as those capable of carrying weapons such as missiles. Some of these are deployed and actively exported. In fact, it is suggested that the Chinese Air Force has created a UAV unit for attack missions. China is currently operating UAVs with information gathering, warning and surveillance as their main missions, but it has been suggested that in the future they may also be used in attacks coordinated with manned aircraft and in saturation attacks using a swarm of a large number of small inexpensive UAVs. In 2023, the KVD-002 UAV, which is expected to be used in support of army helicopters, was unveiled for the first time.

Given such modernization status of the air forces, it is believed that China is steadily improving not only its defense

J-20 Fighter Aircraft

[Specifications, performance]
Maximum speed: 3,063 km/h

[Description]
A fifth-generation stealth fighter aircraft. The Chinese Ministry of National Defense announced in February 2018 that the J-20 has started to be delivered to operational units.



J-20 fighter aircraft
[Imaginechina/Jiji Press Photo]

H-6 Bomber

[Specifications, performance]
Maximum speed: 1,015 km/h
Main armament (H-6K): Air-to-surface cruise missiles (maximum firing range over 1,500 km)



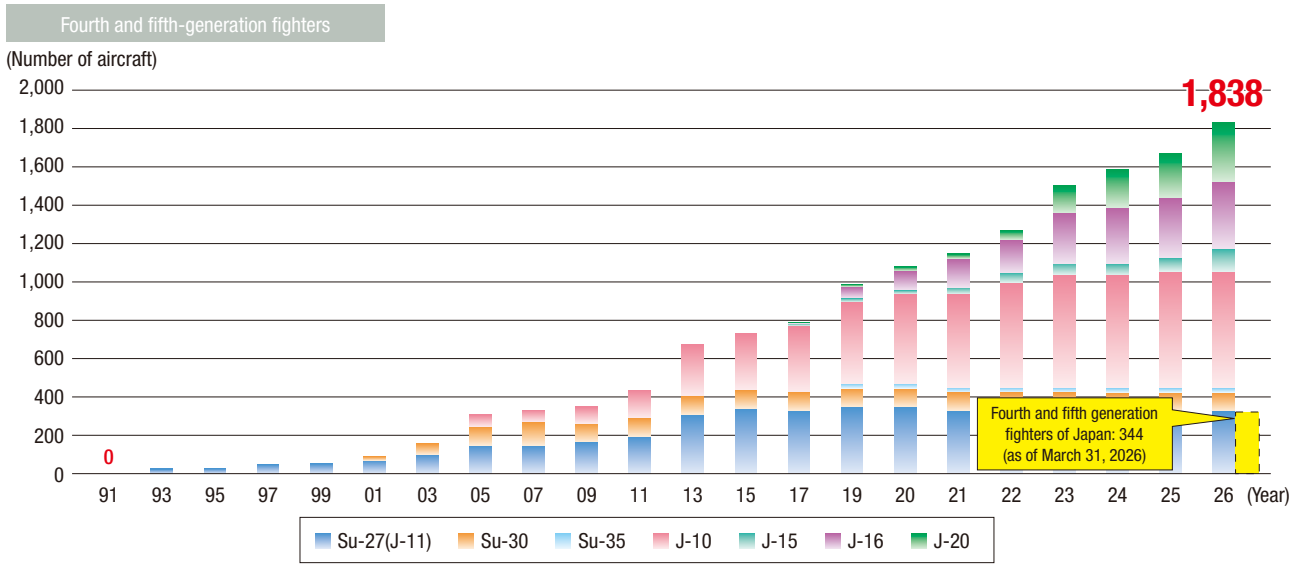
H-6 bomber

[Description]
Indigenous bomber. The H-6 bomber can carry cruise missiles (CJ-20).

capabilities for its national airspace but also capabilities for conducting combat operations and supporting ground and maritime forces in more distant areas.

See Fig. I-3-2-8 (Major Chinese Air Force Capability)

Fig. I-3-2-8 Major Chinese Air Force Capability



(6) Space, Cyber, and Electromagnetic Spectrum Capabilities

In recent years, information gathering, and command and communication in the military sector have increasingly relied on satellites and computer networks. As such, China stated that "outer space and cyberspace have become new commanding heights (capture point) in strategic competition among all parties," indicating that it has recognized the importance of taking on information mastery in wartime when it must protect its own information systems and networks while neutralizing those of its adversaries.

Regarding the space domain, it is believed that China is also planning to improve its ability to conduct military operations in space, given the fact that China's administrative organizations and state-owned enterprises involved in space utilization are said to have close cooperative ties with the military.[24] Specifically, in recent years China has rapidly increased the number of artificial satellites it has which can be used for military purposes, and it is now operating more than 260 such satellites, approximately three times as many compared to ten years ago.[25] For example, the BeiDou global satellite positioning system, which is called a Chinese-version GPS and pointed out as available for ballistic missiles and other guided weapons systems, started its global operation service in late 2018, and it is deemed that the launch of all satellites constituting the BeiDou system was completed in June 2020. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that the Yaogan reconnaissance satellite collects image and radio wave intelligence and obtains location information of naval vessels and others. These capabilities could strengthen the surveillance capabilities of China's naval vessels and others in the Pacific, potentially leading to the building of so-called A2/AD capabilities and operational capabilities at longer ranges.

In the cyber domain, China appears to be strengthening its cyber operations capabilities against networks, and the U.S. Department of War has pointed out that China has the ability to carry out cyberattacks that cause localized and temporary disruption to critical infrastructure in the United States.[26] These kinds of capabilities are thought to bolster China's A2/AD capabilities. Furthermore, it has been noted that current major military training in China always includes cyber operations covering both attack on, and defense of, command systems. The militia as a part of China's armed forces reportedly includes "cyber militias" with excellent cyber domain capabilities.

With regard to the electromagnetic spectrum domain, the presence of aircraft equipped with electronic warfare pods and having electronic warfare capabilities has been pointed out, including not only Y-9 electronic warfare aircraft that have flown in around Japan, but also J-15 carrier-based aircraft, J-16 fighter aircraft, and H-6 bombers.

24 According to "The Worldwide Threat Assessment," the U.S. Director of National Intelligence (2019)
25 According to The Military Balance (2016) and The Military Balance (2026)
26 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoW (2025)

(7) Efforts to Develop Joint Operational Capabilities

In recent years, initiatives have been under way to improve joint operational capabilities in areas from the front line to logistics. The CMC Joint Operations Command Center is believed to have been established under the initiatives for the CCP to carry out decision making at the highest strategic level. The five new theaters established in February 2016 are seen as representing permanent joint operation headquarters. In recent years, China has implemented joint service trainings giving priority to practicality and other drills to improve its joint operational capabilities. These drills are apparently designed to secure the effectiveness of the abovementioned organizational reforms and other initiatives to improve joint operational capabilities and are expected to continue to progress in the future.

6 Maritime and Airspace Activities

(1) General Situation

Recently, China is believed to be aiming to build up capabilities for operations in more distant waters and airspace, including those to project power to waters including the so-called Second Island Chain, beyond the First Island Chain. In such efforts, China has rapidly expanded and intensified its activities in the maritime and aerial domains using its naval and air powers. In waters and airspace surrounding Japan, particularly, Chinese naval vessels and naval and air force aircraft suspected as conducting training and information gathering activities have been observed frequently, along with Chinese naval ships heading for the Pacific and Indian Ocean and numerous CCG vessels operating under the name of protecting maritime interests. These activities include intermittent intrusions by CCG vessels into Japan's territorial waters and dangerous acts that could cause unintended consequences, such as directing fire-control radar at Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) ships and aircraft,[27] Chinese military fighter aircraft approaching abnormally close to JSDF and U.S. military aircraft, and the establishment of the East China Sea ADIZ,[28] and other activities that could infringe upon the freedom of overflight. These activities have become a grave matter of concern and are extremely regrettable. China's intensified military activities, including intrusion by a Chinese military aircraft into Japan's territorial airspace and navigation of a Chinese aircraft carrier through a maritime area close to Japan's territorial waters, have created a situation that could seriously impact Japan's security, which is a cause of grave concern. Furthermore, flying objects that were confirmed within Japanese territorial airspace are strongly presumed to be unmanned reconnaissance balloons flown by China. In addition, in the South China Sea, China is moving forward with militarization of disputed terrain, and expanding and intensifying its activities in air and sea space. It is strengthening its attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion. It is strongly hoped that China will act on the basis of the principle of the rule of law and play active roles in the region and the international community in a more cooperative manner.

(2) Military Activities in Japan's Surrounding Waters and Airspace

The Chinese Navy and Air Force have in recent years expanded and intensified their activities in Japan's surrounding waters and airspace, such as in the area surrounding the Senkaku Islands, including activities viewed to be based on China's claim to the Senkaku Islands. Incidents involving the one-sided escalation of activities have also been seen, creating a situation of great concern to Japan. In this context, 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 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 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 also continued sailing naval vessels through waters near Japan to navigate to distant waters such as the Indian Ocean, and conducting activities viewed as training for maritime and air forces that make forays into the Pacific Ocean and Sea of Japan. In 2025, the number of takeoffs and landings of aircraft from Chinese military aircraft carriers in the Pacific Ocean exceeded 1,400 times, and the activities of aircraft carriers in regions going over the so-called Second Island Chain were confirmed, which indicates that the Chinese military was improving operational capabilities in even further distant areas. Moreover, Chinese military activities have

27 In January 2013, a Chinese naval vessel directed a fire-control radar at a Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) destroyer navigating on the high seas of the East China Sea on January 30. Moreover, it is believed that another Chinese naval vessel directed a fire-control radar at a helicopter mounted on an MSDF destroyer on January 19. Projecting fire-control radar is normally conducted prior to firing at a target and thus it is a dangerous act that may cause unintended consequences.

28 On November 23, 2013, China established the "East China Sea ADIZ" including the Senkaku Islands, misleadingly indicating as if they were China's territory. China requires aircraft flying in the zone to abide by rules set by its Ministry of National Defense and claims to take military "defensive emergency measures" against aircraft failing to do so, unduly infringing on the principle of freedom of overflight. Over the move to unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea, not only Japan but also the United States, the ROK, Australia, and the European Union (EU) expressed concerns.

become more sophisticated in recent years, with signs of improvement in their practical joint operational capabilities, such as military exercises in the vicinity of Taiwan. Chinese military activities in Japan's surrounding waters and airspace should continue to be closely watched with great attention.

See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 1-2-1 (Continuous, Persistent Information Gathering and Warning and Surveillance Surrounding Japan), 2 (Warnings and Scrambles in Preparation against Airspace Violation)

a. Activities in the East China Sea (including the Areas around the Senkaku Islands)

Chinese naval vessels have been conducting operations in the East China Sea continuously and actively.

Declaring its own position regarding Japan's Senkaku Islands, China claims that patrols by Chinese naval vessels in the sea areas under its jurisdiction are completely justifiable and lawful. Chinese naval vessels have been continuously operating in the areas near Japan's Senkaku Islands. In June 2016, a Jiangkai I-class frigate became the first ever Chinese Navy combatant vessel to enter Japan's contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands. In July 2022, a Jiangwei II-class frigate passed into the contiguous zone southwest of the Uotsurishima Island.

Submarine activities have also been confirmed. In January 2018, a submerged Shang-class submarine and a Jiangkai II-class frigate each entered the contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands on the same day. This was the first time a Chinese submarine was identified and announced as conducting submerged transit through the contiguous waters around the Senkaku Islands. In June 2020 and September 2021, submerged transit of a submarine presumed to belong to China was confirmed in the contiguous zone surrounding Amami Oshima Island.

In recent years, activities by Chinese Navy intelligence gathering vessels (AGIs) and survey vessels have also been found. In November 2015, a Dongdiao-class AGI sailed back and forth in waters outside the contiguous zone south of the Senkaku Islands. In June 2016, a Dongdiao-class AGI sailed through Japan's territorial waters near Kuchinoerabujima Island and Yakushima Island in Kagoshima Prefecture, then passed through Japan's contiguous zone north of Kitadaitojima Island (Okinawa Prefecture). Subsequently, the vessel repeatedly conducted east-west passages outside the contiguous zone south of the Senkaku Islands. Furthermore, a Shupang-class survey vessel sailed through Japan's territorial waters near Kuchinoerabujima Island, Kuchinoshima Island, and Yakushima Island in November 2021; April, July, September, November, and December 2022; February, June, and September 2023; and August 2024.

In recent years, Chinese military aircraft have also been active in the airspace closer to the Nansei Islands, including the Senkaku Islands and the main island of Okinawa. Such activities are thought to include warning and surveillance, combat air patrols (CAPs), and training, or may be intended to operate the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone. Further, in August 2024, a Chinese military intelligence-gathering aircraft intruded into Japan's territorial airspace over the waters off the Danjo-gunto Islands in Nagasaki Prefecture. That was the first confirmed and publicized intrusion into Japan's territorial airspace by a Chinese military aircraft since Japan began measures against intrusions into its territorial airspace. The intrusion into Japan's territorial airspace by a PLA aircraft is not only a grave violation of Japan's sovereignty but also a threat to its safety, and it is absolutely unacceptable. Given that China has acknowledged the facts of the incident and indicated it will strive to prevent the recurrence of such an incident, Japan will keep a close eye on China's actions going forward.

Moreover, UAVs activities have been intensifying in recent years in the area surrounding Japan, with frequent instances being seen of UAVs passing between the main island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island or between Yonagunijima Island and Taiwan to enter the Pacific Ocean. The number of announcements of activities by Chinese military UAVs in FY2025 (including presumed announcements) was 16. The UAVs confirmed in the areas surrounding Japan included reconnaissance/attack models which can be armed as well. The PLA may have already established a system for intelligence gathering using UAVs in the areas surrounding Japan.

b. Advancements into the Pacific Ocean

Chinese Navy combatant vessels continue to transit the waters near Japan to advance into the Pacific Ocean with high frequency, and their activities in the waters on the Pacific Ocean side of Japan are expanding and intensifying. Regarding entry routes for Chinese naval vessels into the Pacific Ocean, they have been confirmed as transiting the sea area between the main island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island, the Osumi Strait, the sea area between Yonagunijima Island and Iriomotejima Island in Okinawa Prefecture, the sea area between Amami Oshima Island and Yokoatejima Island in Kagoshima Prefecture, and in addition the Tsugaru Strait and the Soya Strait via the Tsushima Strait.

Aircraft carriers operating in the Pacific Ocean have also been confirmed. Since the aircraft carrier Liaoning, along with several other vessels, passed through the sea area between the main island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island in December 2016, it had entered the Pacific Ocean a total of 13 times by the end of May 2026. In addition, after the aircraft carrier Shandong was first confirmed operating in the Pacific Ocean in April 2023, it had entered the Pacific a total of 9 times by the end of May 2026. Concerning these forays into the Pacific Ocean, in addition to cases of passing from the South China Sea through the Bashi Channel and passing through the sea area between the main island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island from the East China Sea, in September 2024 for the first time a Chinese aircraft carrier was confirmed passing through sea areas near Japan's territorial waters between Yonagunijima Island and Iriomotejima Island from

the East China Sea. In addition, the landing and takeoff of carrier-based fighter aircraft from the carriers in the Pacific Ocean has also been frequently confirmed. Moreover, the Ministry of Defense and the JSDF confirmed and announced for the first time in June 2025 that one aircraft carrier was active in the sea area on the east side of Iwo-To and that two aircraft carriers were active in the Pacific Ocean at the same time, and in December that an aircraft carrier was active in the Pacific Ocean, from the main island of Okinawa to the east of Amami Oshima Island.

Through this expansion into the Pacific, China seems to be aiming to improve the operational capabilities of its maritime forces, including aircraft carriers, and its ability to carry out operations in distant waters.

Regarding air forces, advances into the Pacific Ocean by a naval aircraft was first confirmed in 2013, followed by an air force aircraft in 2015. Since 2017, advances into the Pacific Ocean involving passage through the airspace between the main island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island have further intensified. Furthermore, the types of military aircraft that pass through this airspace are becoming more diverse year by year. Bomber flights have also been confirmed, and it has been indicated that the Chinese military is believed to be conducting training exercises and other activities targeting the United States and its allies.[29]

Flight patterns of Chinese military aircraft have also been changing. Flights from the East China Sea to the Pacific Ocean, passing between the main island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island, and from the direction of the Bashi Channel to the Pacific Ocean, both with the return trips on the same shuttle routes, have been repeatedly made. In 2016, H-6K bombers and other aircraft were confirmed as flying around Taiwan. In August 2017, H-6K bombers were confirmed as flying to waters off the Kii Peninsula after advancing to the Pacific Ocean via waters between the main island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island for the first time.

Through frequent long-distance flights of bombers and other aircraft, including advancements to the Pacific, and their advanced flight paths and composition, China's air forces are thought to be demonstrating their presence around areas, including those surrounding Japan, and planning further enhancements to more practical operational capabilities.

Additionally, activities considered planned to improve sea and air joint operational capabilities in more distant areas, such as what seemed to be air-to-ship attack drills including advancements to the Pacific Ocean, have been seen in recent years. China is expected to further expand and intensify naval and air activities in the Pacific Ocean.

c. Activities in the Sea of Japan

In the Sea of Japan, China has been intensifying the military activities of its maritime and air forces.

As for naval forces, they have been sailing into the Sea of Japan occasionally, such as navigating toward distant waters for trainings. Intelligence-gathering ships have also been frequently confirmed passing through the Tsushima Strait.

Regarding aircraft, activities in the Sea of Japan have increased since it was confirmed in January 2016 that Chinese military aircraft passed through the Tsushima Strait for the first time. The types of military aircraft flying in this airspace are also becoming more diverse, and in March 2024, a WZ-7 reconnaissance-type UAV was confirmed flying for the first time.

China is anticipated to continue to expand and intensify its activities in the Sea of Japan also in the future.

See Fig. I-3-2-9 (PLA's Recent Activities in the Surrounding Sea Area and Airspace of Japan (image)), Fig. I-3-2-10 (Changes in the Number of Scrambles against Chinese Aircraft), Fig. I-3-2-11 (Number of Announcements of Chinese Combatant Ships' and Aircraft Carriers' Activities around the Southwestern Islands and the Soya and Tsugaru Straits), Fig. I-3-2-12 (Number of Announcements of Chinese Military Aircraft's Passage between the Main Island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island), Fig. I-3-2-13 (Number of Announcements of Chinese Combatant Ships' Passage through the Tsushima Strait), Fig. I-3-2-14 (Number of Announcements of Chinese Military Aircraft's Passage through the Tsushima Strait)

(3) Activities of Chinese Ships including CCG Vessels in the East China Sea (including Areas around the Senkaku Islands)

CCG vessels have been seen almost every day in the contiguous zone of the Senkaku Islands, Japan's inherent territory, and repeatedly intruded into Japan's territorial waters. Since the activities of CCG vessels based on China's own assertion conducted in Japan's territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands are violating international law, Japan has been strongly protesting against these activities and requested them to leave many times. However, despite Japan's strong protests, CCG vessels continued to repeatedly intrude into Japan's territorial waters in FY2025, with violations occurring every month. Additionally, incidents occurred in which CCG ships attempted to approach Japanese fishing boats navigating in Japanese territorial waters near the Senkaku Islands.

China Marine Surveillance vessels previously intruded into Japan's territorial waters for the first time in December 2008. Since then, vessels belonging to the Chinese government have gradually amplified their activities in Japanese territorial waters. Such activities have intensified greatly since September 2012, when the Japanese Government acquired three of the Senkaku Islands (Uotsurishima Island, Kitakojima Island, and Minamikojima Island).

29 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2018)

Fig. I-3-2-9 PLA's Recent Activities in the Surrounding Sea Area and Airspace of Japan (image)

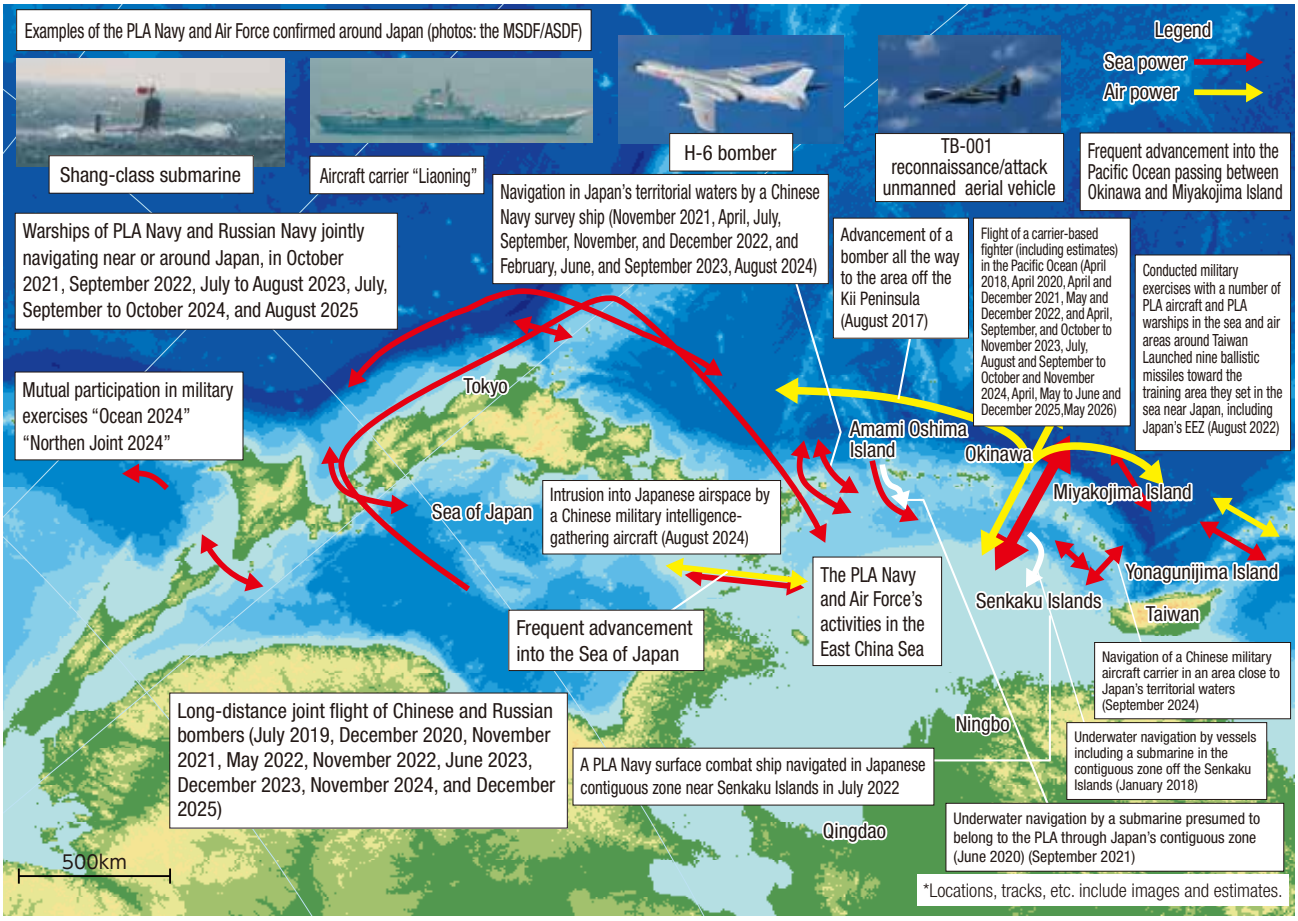


Fig. I-3-2-10 Changes in the Number of Scrambles against Chinese Aircraft

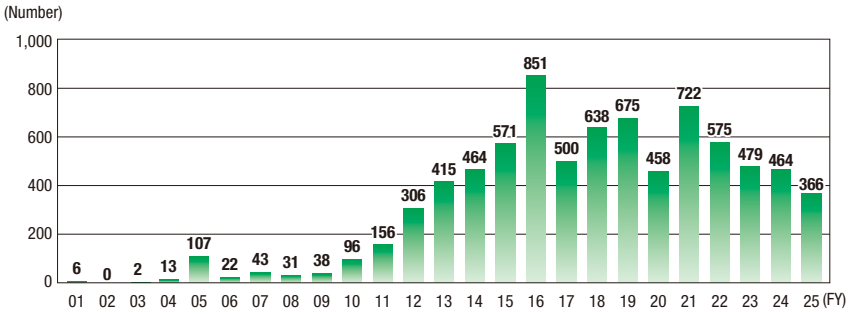


Fig. I-3-2-11 Number of Announcements of Chinese Combatant Ships' and Aircraft Carriers' Activities around the Southwestern Islands and the Soya and Tsugaru Straits

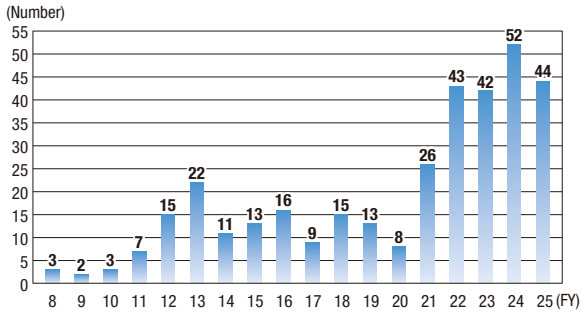


Fig. I-3-2-12 Number of Announcements of Chinese Military Aircraft's Passage between the Main Island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island

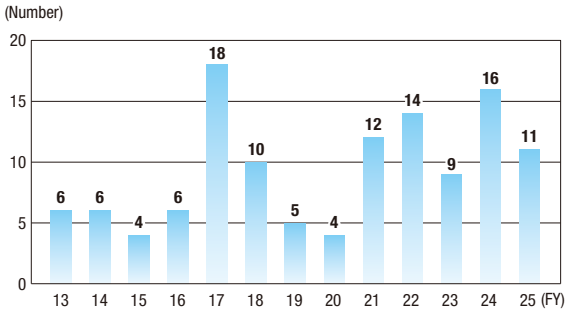


Fig. I-3-2-13 Number of Announcements of Chinese Combatant Ships' Passage through the Tsushima Strait

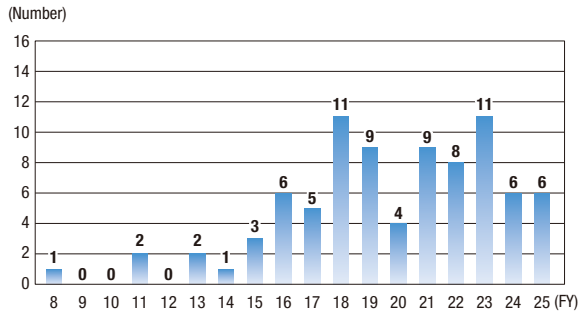
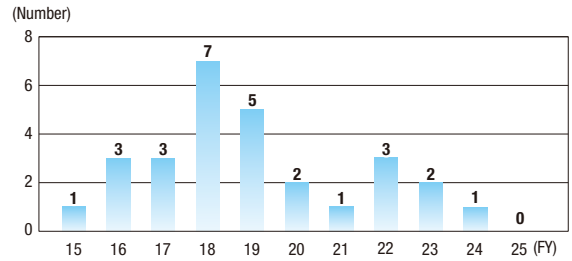


Fig. I-3-2-14 Number of Announcements of Chinese Military Aircraft's Passage through the Tsushima Strait



China is seen to be steadily strengthening an operational posture intended to use CCG vessels to intrude into Japan's territorial waters. For example, the number of vessels involved in each territorial sea intrusion was about two to three until around 2016, whereas in recent years, the number of four-vessel intrusions has increased. In addition, since December 2015 vessels equipped with guns have repeatedly intruded into Japan's territorial waters. In June 2024, four vessels equipped with guns intruded into the territorial waters. Thereafter, CCG vessels active within the contiguous zone have all carried guns (as of the end of March 2026). In 2025, the number of days on which CCG vessel activities were confirmed in the contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands reached 357, the highest on record.

Cases indicating the improvement of CCG vessels' operational capabilities have been also confirmed. From November 2024 to October 2025, CCG vessels were seen in the contiguous zone of the Senkaku Islands for a record 335 consecutive days.

In December 2012, a fixed-wing aircraft of the State Oceanic Administration was identified as the first Chinese aircraft to intrude into Japan's airspace around the Senkaku Islands. In May 2017, an object that appeared to be a small drone was flying above a CCG vessel intruding into the Japanese territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands and the object intruded into Japan's territorial airspace. In May 2025, a CCG helicopter, which took off from a CCG vessel intruding into Japanese territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands, violated Japan's territorial airspace.

China has thus relentlessly continued attempts at unilateral changes to the status quo by force or coercion in the sea area around the Senkaku Islands, leading to a grave matter of concern. Japan cannot accept China's actions to escalate the situation.

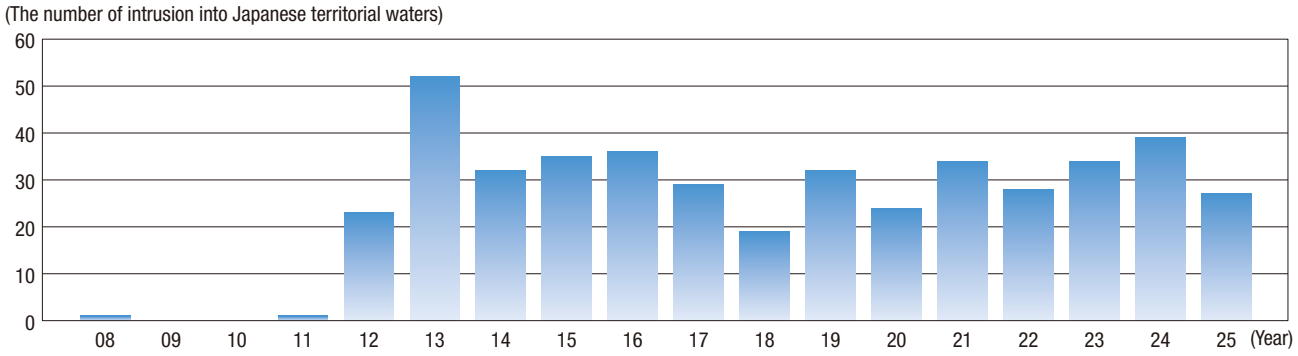
In addition, in the East China Sea, China continues to engage in unilateral resource development activities even though the boundaries between Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelf and those of China have not yet been demarcated. Since June 2013, it has been confirmed that construction work is progressing on a new offshore platform. This is in addition to the four offshore platforms installed on the Chinese side of the Japan-China median line in the East China Sea prior to the 2008 agreement on resource development in the East China Sea. Japan has repeatedly protested against this ongoing unilateral development by China, while simultaneously requesting that the work be halted.

In July 2023, a buoy was found within Japan's EEZ on the east side of the geographical median line in the East China Sea. The buoy was believed to be installed by China. Japan has lodged a protest with China regarding this matter and strongly requested its immediate removal. In February

2025, the buoy was confirmed to no longer be in Japan's EEZ. Another buoy, which was confirmed to have been in Japan's EEZ south of Yonagunijima Island in December 2024, was also confirmed to no longer be in Japan's EEZ in May 2025.

See Fig. I-3-2-15 (Activities by China Coast Guard Vessels, etc., around the Senkaku Islands), Reference 15 (Number of Days and Total Incursions into the Territorial Waters Around the Senkaku Islands by Ships Belonging to the China Coast Guard Bureau, etc.)

Fig. I-3-2-15 Activities by China Coast Guard Vessels, etc., around the Senkaku Islands



(4) Trends of Activities around Taiwan

China has intensified military activities around Taiwan. According to announcements from the Ministry of National Defense of Taiwan, entry into airspace around Taiwan by Chinese military aircraft has been on the rise since September 2020. The total number of aircraft that entered its airspace was over 970 in 2021, over 1,700 in 2022 and 2023, over 3,000 in 2024, and over 3,700 in 2025. Furthermore, according to an announcement by Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense, Chinese military aircraft have repeatedly entered the airspace east of the "median line"[30] of the Taiwan Strait since Nancy Pelosi, then Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives visited Taiwan in August 2022. In addition to conventional fighter aircraft and bombers, other aircraft such as attack helicopters, air refueling tankers, and UAVs have reportedly been observed entering the airspace since 2021. The number of Chinese naval vessels confirmed in the waters around Taiwan has also been increasing. There were approximately 1,900 in 2023, approximately 2,500 in 2024, and approximately 2,600 in 2025.

Furthermore, since August 2022, China has frequently conducted military exercises in the sea and airspace surrounding Taiwan.

On August 2, 2022, China announced that it set six training areas surrounding Taiwan, and that it would conduct "a series of integrated military operations" around Taiwan, in conjunction with the visit of Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Pelosi to Taiwan. China launched nine ballistic missiles on August 4, 2022, five of which landed within Japan's EEZ, and another landed at the closest point to Japanese territory, which was about 80 km from Yonagunijima Island. This is a serious issue relating to Japan's security and the safety of its people and was perceived as a threat to local residents. In addition, some of the missiles passed over Taiwan. After that, the PLA continued the large-scale military exercise covering subjects such as integrated blockage, surface/ground attack, air superiority combat, aerial reconnaissance, and anti-submarine warfare in air space and sea space around Taiwan for about one week.

Since that exercise, China has also conducted military exercises in the sea and airspace around Taiwan in April and August 2023, May and October 2024, and April and December 2025.

Although China has not announced its activities, on December 9, 2024 Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense stated that China's military fleets of the Eastern, Northern, and Southern Theater Commands as well as CCG vessels are entering the waters around the Taiwan Strait and western Pacific Ocean waters, and conducting activities such as long-distance navigation on the far seas. Taiwan's President Lai took a week-long tour from November 30 to the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, and Palau, which diplomatically recognize Taiwan, by way of Hawaii and Guam.

The exercises conducted in the vicinity of Taiwan by the PLA may have rehearsed some parts of military operations directed at unification with Taiwan, including invading Taiwan.

30 The line that was supposed to have been set over the Taiwan Strait by the United States in the 1950s. Taiwan insists on the existence of the median line, and published the coordinates of it, while China claims, "Taiwan is an inalienable part of China, hence the so-called the 'median line' does not exist." Chinese military aircraft hardly crossed over the line until now.

During the exercise held in May 2024, activities by CCG vessels conducted in areas including the waters to the east of Taiwan were announced for the first time. During the exercise held in October of the same year, CCG vessels expanded their activities, including navigating around the entirety of Taiwan. It has been noted that China may be placing more emphasis on the role of its CCG in causing a gray-zone situation. Moreover, compared to past exercises, the exercise conducted in April 2025 stepped up specific blockade related actions, such as warning, expulsion, interception and detention by the military. In an exercise in December of the same year, it was announced that long-range live-fire drills directed at the sea areas surrounding Taiwan (northern and southern Taiwan) would be conducted, which is believed to be the first such exercise since August 2022.

It is believed that through the series of activities around Taiwan, China seeks to create a fait accompli that the PLA is continuously operating there and improve its actual combat capabilities.

These intensified military activities indicate a situation, where the possibility could not be excluded that tension between China and Taiwan rises in the military sense. Stabilizing the situation surrounding Taiwan is important for the stability of the international community. Therefore, it is necessary that we pay close attention to the situation with a sense of crisis more than ever before.

See Fig. 1-3-2-16 (The Main Military Exercises around Taiwan Announced by the Chinese Military)

Fig. I-3-2-16 The Main Military Exercises around Taiwan Announced by the Chinese Military

	August 2022	April 2023	August 2023	May 2024	October 2024	April 2025	December 2025
Event related to the exercise	 Visit to Taiwan by then U.S. House Speaker Pelosi (She stayed from the evening of August 2 to the evening of August 3)	 Visit to the United States by then President Tsai Ing-wen (transit) (Meeting with Kevin McCarthy, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives) (Meeting on April 6/Arrival in Taiwan on April 7)	 Visit to the United States by then Vice President Lai Ching-te (transit) (Arrival in Taiwan on August 18)	 Presidential inauguration ceremony of President Lai Ching-te Address at the inauguration ceremony (May 20)	 Address by President Lai Ching-te at the "Double Tenth National Day Celebration" ceremony (October 10)	 Announcement of the threats from China and countermeasures (March 13)	 U.S. arms sale to Taiwan [AFP-Jiji] (December 17)
Name of exercise	"A series of integrated military operations"	"Joint Sword"	(Name not announced)	"Joint Sword-2024A"	"Joint Sword-2024B"	1st day: no name announced 2nd day: "Strait Thunder 2025A"	"Justice Mission 2025"
Theater in which the exercise was conducted	Eastern Theater	Eastern Theater	Eastern Theater	Eastern Theater	Eastern Theater	Eastern Theater	Eastern Theater
Period during which the exercise was conducted (announced by China)	7 days (August 4 to August 10)	3 days (April 8 to April 10)	1 day (August 19 only)	2 days (May 23 to May 24)	1 day (October 14 only)	2 days (April 1 to April 2)	3 days (December 29 to 31)
Announcement that the exercise would be conducted	Evening of August 2 * The day of the event which is thought to have prompted the exercise * Two days before the day on which the exercise commenced	April 8 * The day after the event which is thought to have prompted the exercise * The day on which the exercise commenced	August 19 * The day after the event which is thought to have prompted the exercise * The day on which the exercise commenced	May 23 * Three days after the event which is thought to have prompted the exercise * The day on which the exercise commenced	October 14 * Four days after the event which is thought to have prompted the exercise * The day on which the exercise commenced	April 1 * 19 days after the event which is thought to have prompted the exercise * The day on which the exercise commenced	December 29 * 12 days after the event which is thought to have prompted the exercise * The day on which the exercise commenced
Establishment of the exercise zone	The training areas and navigation warnings announced on August 2 (Some of the training areas overlapped with Japan's EEZ)	None	None	Chart published on May 23	Chart published on October 14	None	Exercise sea and air areas, navigation warnings, etc. were announced on December 29
Participation of aircraft carriers	None	Yes (Aircraft carrier "Shandong")	None	None	Yes (Aircraft carrier "Liaoning")	Yes (Aircraft carrier "Shandong")	None
Others	• Nine ballistic missiles launched (of which five landed inside Japan's EEZ)	• Entry into the Pacific Ocean by aircraft carrier "Shandong" was confirmed for the first time.	• Approximately six months before the Taiwan presidential election • It has been pointed out that the Chinese aircraft flew a longer distance east of the "Median Line" than previously.	• Participation of China Coast Guard vessels in the exercise announced for the first time • Conducting of an exercise around the outer islands of Taiwan (Kinmen, Matsu, etc.) announced for the first time	• The "blockade and control of important ports and regions" and the conducting of encircling patrols by the China Coast Guard around Taiwan Island announced for the first time.	• Long-range live ammunition firing by army units, and warning isolation, stopping, seizure, etc. by the military announced for the first time	• The announcement of live-fire drills in waters around Taiwan (north and south of Taiwan) and the establishment of exercise areas prohibiting the entry of aircraft, etc. in a manner encircling Taiwan were made for the first time since August 2022

(Photo source) Office of the President, Taiwan

(5) Trends of Activities in the South China Sea

China has also been intensifying its activities based on assertions of unlawful maritime claims in the South China Sea, such as in waters around the Spratly Islands and Paracel Islands, over which territorial disputes exist with neighbors, including Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries.

Since 2014, China has pressed ahead with large-scale and rapid land reclamation at seven features[31] of the Spratly Islands. The Philippines-China arbitration award issued in July 2016 denied the "historic rights" as the basis of the "nine-dash line" claimed by China, and determined the illegality of China's activities such as land reclamation. However, China has made clear it would not comply with this decision and is currently carrying out militarization, including continuing military activities while promoting the development of various kinds of infrastructure that can be used for military purposes. It has been pointed out that if China were to consider bastion operations (fortification) to enhance the survivability of new types of long-range SLBMs capable of hitting the continental United States, the South China Sea would be the suitable choice.[32] If these features in the South China Sea are used for full-scale military purposes, it could significantly change the security environment in the Indo-Pacific region. Attention must continue to be paid to the situation in the South China Sea going forward.

On Fiery Cross Reef, Subi Reef, and Mischief Reefs, called the Big Three of the seven features of the Spratly Islands, China has developed batteries for anti-aircraft guns, missile shelters, underground storage facilities pointed out to be ammunition storage, large ports capable of accommodating combatant ships, and runways available for takeoff and landing of fighter aircraft and bombers.

In April 2018, it was reported that anti-ship cruise missiles and surface-to-air missiles were deployed on Fiery Cross Reef, Subi Reef and Mischief Reef and that radar jamming systems were deployed to Mischief Reef. Additionally, in May 2020, it was reported that the Y-8 patrol aircraft and Y-9 early warning aircraft may have been deployed on a rotational basis to Fiery Cross Reef.

Furthermore, it has been pointed out that construction of facilities such as harbors, helipads, and radar on Cuarteron Reef, Gaven Reefs, Hughes Reef, and Johnson Reef has made progress and what appears to be large anti-aircraft guns and close-in weapon system (CIWS) may have already been deployed. In December 2022, it was reported that new construction activities were being carried out on the other four features in the Spratly Islands.

China carried out the militarization of the Paracel Islands before that of the Spratly Islands. China has reportedly extended the runway to nearly 3,000 m on Woody Island since 2013. Since 2015, the presence of J-11 and J-10 fighter jets and equipment that appears to be surface-to-air missiles has been confirmed. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that in May 2025, H-6 bombers were deployed for the first time since 2020. In addition, it has been pointed out that new construction activities were commenced on Triton Island in August 2023 and new land reclamation was commenced on Antelope Reef in October 2025.

In November 2024, the Philippines announced it had signed a domestic law aimed at defining its territorial waters and EEZ, including the territorial waters around Scarborough Shoal, in accordance with international law, and China condemned this as a serious infringement on its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights. In the same month, China established baselines for its territorial sea adjacent to Scarborough Shoal and published "standard names" for the features of the South China Sea. Furthermore, in September 2025, China announced that it had designated a part of the Scarborough Shoal a "national nature reserve" and in response to this the Philippines and the United States issued statements calling for China to abide by the July 2016 Philippines-China arbitration award.

Regarding Scarborough Shoal, it is pointed out that new land reclamations may be carried out in the future and it is also pointed out that if China conducts land reclamations and installs radar facilities, runways, and other infrastructure on Scarborough Shoal, it could possibly increase its ability for situation awareness and power projection capabilities in the surrounding sea area and ultimately enhance its operational capabilities throughout all the areas of the South China Sea.

Moreover, China is also expanding and intensifying its activities in the sea and airspace in the South China Sea.

For example, in 2016, after the Philippines-China arbitral award, Chinese Air Force H-6K bombers conducted "combat patrol flights" in the airspace near Scarborough Shoal, and the Chinese Ministry of National Defense announced that these patrols would be "regularized" in the future. In the same year, a joint Chinese-Russian naval exercise called "Maritime Cooperation 2016" that was held in the South China Sea for the first time.

In 2020, when the establishment of new administrative regions called "Xisha (Paracel) District" and "Nansha (Spratly) District" under Sansha City, Hainan Province was unilaterally announced, in July, China conducted simultaneous military exercises in three sea areas (South China Sea, East China Sea, and Yellow Sea) and is believed to have launched intermediate-range ballistic missiles in August.

Since May 2021, there have been frequent reports of training exercises involving carrier-based aircraft takeoff from and landing on the aircraft carrier Shandong. Recently, the Southern Theater has announced multiple times that it conducted joint sea-air combat readiness patrols, and the joint Chinese-Russian naval exercise, "Maritime Cooperation

31 Since 2014, on seven features of the Spratly Islands (Fiery Cross Reef, Subi Reef, Mischief Reef, Cuarteron Reef, Gaven Reefs, Hughes Reef, and Johnson South Reef), China has pressed ahead with large-scale and rapid land reclamation.

32 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2023)

2024," was held in the South China Sea in July 2024. Also, in October of the same year, it was reported that the aircraft carriers, Shandong and Liaoning, conducted dual aircraft carrier formation exercise for the first time.

In addition, there have been frequent incidents in which Chinese vessels and aircraft approached and obstructed the vessels and aircraft of other countries, such as the United States, that are operating in the sea and airspace of this region.[33]

Notably, in recent years, there have been frequent reports of obstructive activities such as by China Coast Guard vessels toward coastal countries including the Philippines. Especially between China and the Philippine, the Philippine government has announced that dangerous maneuvers including collisions and the firing of water cannons by Chinese ships such as its Coast Guard vessels against Philippine ships have resulted in injuries to the Philippine personnel onboard and damage to the Philippine vessel.

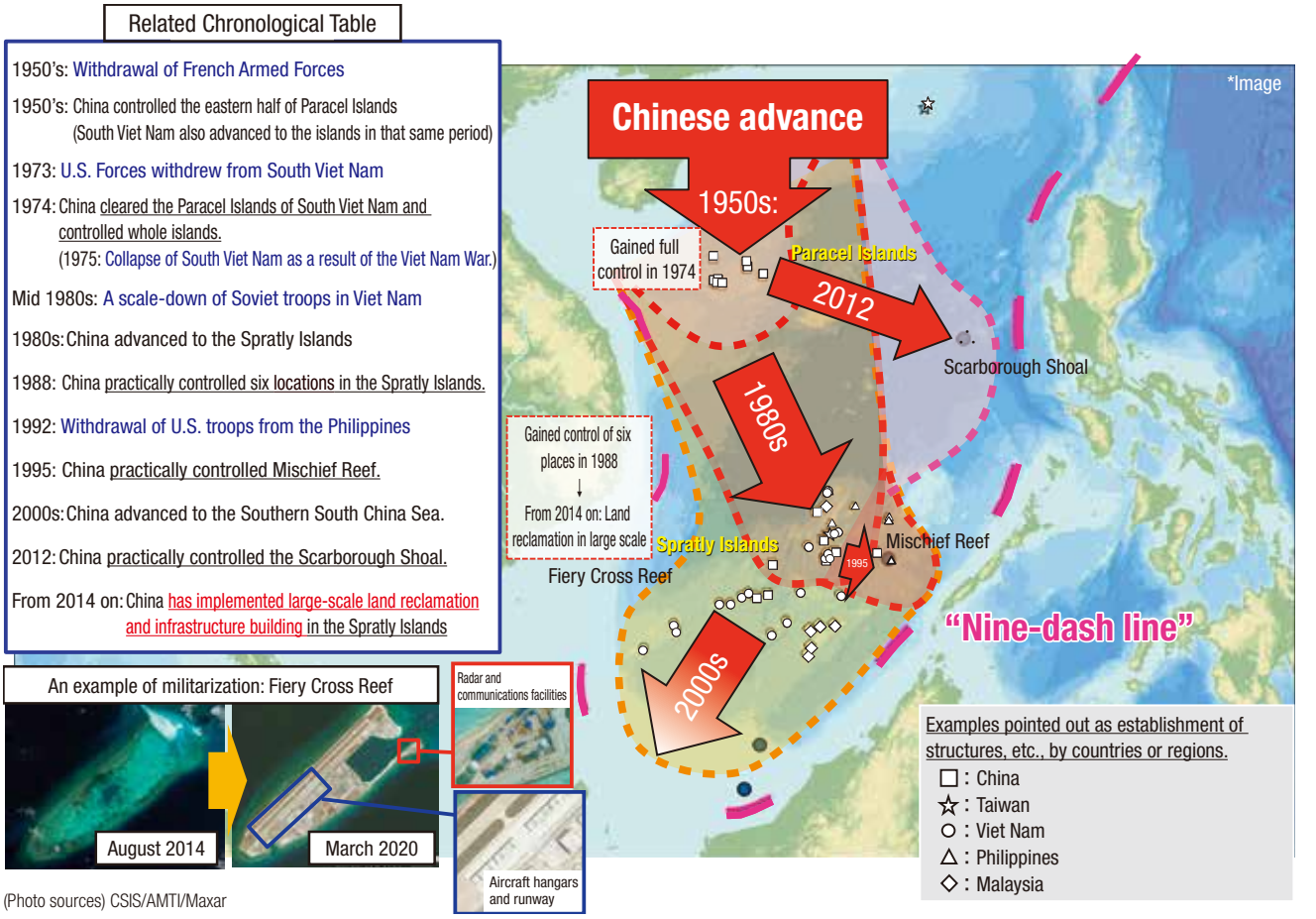
In this way, it appears that China seeks to expand its presence and enhance sustained operational capability and other joint operational capabilities including military and other means in the South China Sea.

Such activities conducted by China based on its own assertions of unlawful maritime claims further advance its attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion. Not only Japan but the international community centered on like-minded countries including the United States and other G7 member states has repeatedly expressed deep concern about and strong opposition to these activities.

Unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion are unacceptable anywhere in the world. The peace and stability of the South China Sea, a critical sea lines of communication in the region, is a legitimate matter of concern directly connected to the prosperity of not only Japan but also the entire international community. Countries concerned, including China, are urged to refrain from unilateral actions that increase tension and act on the basis of the principle of the rule of law.

See Fig. I-3-2-17 (Example of China's Advancement and Militarization Utilizing the Power Vacuum in the South China Sea (image))

Fig. I-3-2-17 Example of China's Advancement and Militarization Utilizing the Power Vacuum in the South China Sea (image)



(Photo sources) CSIS/AMTI/Maxar

33 In March 2009, December 2013 and September 2018, Chinese naval and other vessels approached and intercepted U.S. Navy vessels which were navigating in the South China Sea.
Furthermore, in May 2016, February 2017 and May 2017, PLA fighter aircraft allegedly flew close to U.S. Forces aircraft.

(6) Trends in the Indian Ocean and Other More Distant Waters

The Chinese Navy is considered to be shifting toward "protection missions on the far seas" and has been steadily increasing its capabilities to conduct operations in more distant waters, such as the Indian Ocean, in recent years. Progress has been seen in the Navy's development of such equipment as large combatant ships and replenishment ships and in its operational initiatives, such as deployment to distant sea areas and securing bases for this purpose.

Since December 2008, Chinese naval vessels have been deployed off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden to take part in international counter-piracy efforts. The dispatched ships are also conducting joint trainings[34] with the militaries of other countries in the Indian Ocean and elsewhere, and in 2025 they conducted joint trainings with Russia and Iran at Iran's Chabahar Port in March.

China has also deployed a space observation support ship in the southern Pacific Ocean and dispatched a military hospital ship under the operation, Mission Harmony, to offer medical services. In 2025, it was dispatched to the South Pacific Ocean, the South America region, and other places.

In September 2015, five Chinese naval vessels reportedly sailed in the high seas of the Bering Sea and in U.S. territorial waters near the Aleutian Islands. In September 2022 and August 2023, Russia announced that Chinese vessels participating in joint navigation with Russia sailed through the Bering Sea. China has deployed vessels such as the polar research vessel, Xue Long 2, to the Arctic Ocean a total of 15 times since 1999.[35] In January 2018, China published a white paper entitled, "China's Arctic Policy," which mapped out a policy of active involvement in Arctic initiatives, including efforts to build a Polar Silk Road through the development of the Northern Sea Route. It is pointed out that China could take advantage of scientific survey and commercial activities to increase its presence including military activities in the Arctic Ocean.[36]

China has been remarkably trying to secure overseas outposts such as harbors. For example, in August 2017, China began to operate a "support base" for logistics support of the PLA in Djibouti facing the Gulf of Aden. Moreover, with regards to Cambodia's Ream Naval Base, located in southwestern Cambodia, the possibility of China's exclusive use of portion of the base has been pointed out. In April 2025, an inauguration ceremony was held in Cambodia to commemorate the completion of upgrade work at the naval base and the establishment of the Cambodia-China Joint Logistics and Training Center. The Prime Minister of Cambodia has declared that he will not allow the establishment of foreign military bases in Cambodia in violation of its constitution but all friendly nations are welcome to visit. Ships from Japan and Viet Nam have made port calls at the naval base after its upgrade and a U.S. Navy littoral combat ship (LCS) also made a port call in January 2026. Further movements pertaining to that naval base continue to draw attention.

The Chinese military is said to be considering and planning to establish military logistics facilities in multiple countries, including Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates, Kenya, Equatorial Guinea, Seychelles, Tanzania, Angola, Nigeria, Namibia, Mozambique, Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tajikistan, Cuba, and Vanuatu.[37] China has been promoting its **"Belt and Road" Initiative (BRI)** whose main purpose is advertised as establishing an economic zone in regions including the Eurasian continent, with the Chinese military possibly taking on the role of the shield behind the initiative by such means as the stabilization of areas via counter-piracy activities and the improvement of counter-terrorism capabilities in coastal states through bilateral and multilateral exercises. While it is thought that the initiative includes a strategic intention to expand its influence in the region, it is possible that the initiative will further improve the PLA's operational capabilities in the Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean and elsewhere. For example, China's support for the construction of port infrastructure in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and other Indian Ocean countries as well as Pacific Island countries including Vanuatu could lead China to secure outposts available for its military purposes.

See Chapter 3, Section 11-2-3 (Trends in the Arctic Ocean and the Arctic Region)

KEY WORD **"Belt and Road" Initiative**

An economic zone concept advanced by General Secretary Xi. The "Silk Road Economic Belt" ("One Belt") and the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" ("One Road") were announced in September and October 2013, respectively. Since then, the two concepts have been collectively referred to as the "Belt and Road" Initiative.

(7) Objectives of Activities in Waters and Airspace

The development and activities of Chinese naval and air forces, descriptions in defense white papers, China's geographical conditions and globalizing economy, and other factors indicate that the recent water and airspace activities of the Navy, Air Force and other Chinese organizations have

34 In addition to military exercises, port calls to countries along the Indian Ocean, etc., are also frequent.

35 In 2012, Xue Long became the first polar research vessel to sail across the Arctic Ocean. In 2013, the cargo freighter Yong Sheng became the first Chinese commercial ship to cross the Arctic Ocean. Canadian scientists took part in Xue Long's voyage to the Arctic Ocean in 2017, and they succeeded for the first time in trial navigation of the Arctic Northwest Passage (along the north coast of Canada). Furthermore, its second polar research vessel Xue Long 2 completed its first Arctic Sea cruising in September 2020, and China is promoting research and construction of a heavy icebreaker.

36 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2019)

37 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoW (2025)

the following objectives.

The first is to intercept operations by adversaries in waters and airspace as far as possible from China in order to defend its territorial land, waters and airspace. Behind this objective is an increase in the effectiveness of long-range attacks due to recent progress in science and technology.

The second is to develop capabilities to deter and prevent Taiwan's independence. China maintains that it will not allow any foreign intervention in solving the Taiwan issue and realizing the unification of China. To ensure the prevention of foreign intervention in the Taiwan issue, China needs to enhance its operational capabilities at sea and airspace as Taiwan is surrounded by the sea in all directions.

The third is to weaken the control of other countries over islands and the surrounding waters and airspace on which China's one-sided claims to sovereignty and marine interests exist, by means of various surveillance activities and the use of force, thereby strengthening such one-sided claims. Such activities of China are considered to also have the purpose of creating a fait accompli as part of the reasons for unilaterally changing the status quo and justifying China's claims based on its own concept of "legal warfare."

The fourth is to acquire, maintain, and protect its maritime rights and interests. China is engaged in oil and gas drilling as well as fishing and navigating in the East and South China Seas. In order to continue these activities safely and stably, the Chinese military is believed to be playing a role as a backstop, deterring the activities of maritime law enforcement organizations of other countries through its military presence.

The fifth is to defend its sea lines of communication. In the background is the fact that its sea lines of communication, including its oil transportation routes from the Middle East, are essential for the Chinese economy. Given the recent strengthening of the Chinese Navy and Air Force, it is believed that they have been expanding military capabilities to cover distant waters beyond China's near seas.

Given these objectives of China's recent sea and airspace activities and trends, it is believed that China plans to further expand the sphere of its activities and further intensify its operations in waters surrounding Japan, including the East China Sea, the South China Sea, and the Pacific Ocean, as well as the Indian Ocean.

7 International Military Activities

In recent years, the PLA has been indicating its positive attitude on nontraditional security missions such as peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and counterpiracy, dispatching numerous units for such overseas missions.

China has vowed to consistently support and actively participate in UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs), increasing its presence in UN PKOs.

According to the United Nations (UN), as of the end of January 2026, China had a total of 1,659 personnel including troops and police members—the largest number of peacekeepers among the permanent members of the UN Security Council—engaged in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and other UN PKOs. China's share has remained the second largest in the UN PKO budget, after that of the United States, since 2016.

Moreover, China has been actively participating in counter-piracy activities off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief activities.

It is pointed out that factors behind such Chinese attitude include the growing need for protecting and promoting China's national interests overseas following the expansion of national interests beyond its national borders, China's attempt to verify military capabilities including units' long-distance deployment through operations, its intent to raise its status by demonstrating its will to fulfill its responsibilities to the international community, its hope to diffuse the military's peaceful and humanitarian images, and its attempt to enhance relations with PKO regions including African countries.

8 Education and Training

In recent years, the PLA under the policy of building a military that "can fight and win a war" has promoted practical exercises including large-scale ones such as joint exercises led by theater commands, force-on-force exercises, landing exercises, inter-theater exercises, and large exercises including distant ones, as well as night-time exercises and joint exercises with other countries, in order to strengthen its operational capabilities.

In the education spectrum as well, the PLA aims to train soldiers who have the ability to execute joint operations. It was reported in 2017 that the PLA National Defense University began training to develop human resources capable of directing joint operations.

China has been developing defense mobilization systems and others in order to effectively utilize private resources in case of emergencies, including wars. The military use of civilian resources includes civilian ships' transportation of military equipment. Also, in his speech at the 20th CCP Congress, General Secretary Xi raised the issue of deepening national defense education as a part of improving "Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities." In September 2024, China revised the National Defense Education Law and newly instituted the implementation of national defense education that is tied to patriotism.

Such an initiative mobilizes society's overall resources to the military and generally augments China's forces available for military missions. As it is expected to proactively be promoted in the future, the initiative's implications for the Chinese military forces' operational capabilities must be watched closely.

9 National Defense Industry Sector

Under the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense (SASTIND) of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, a department of the State Council, China's main national defense industry consists of 10 corporations to develop and produce nuclear weapons, missiles and rockets, aircraft, vessels, information systems and other military equipment.

While China imports highly sophisticated military equipment and parts that it cannot produce domestically from other countries such as Russia, it is believed that China places emphasis on the enhancement of its military industrial sector, including the domestic production of equipment, to modernize its military. It has been pointed out that China is acquiring technologies ambitiously not only through domestic technology research and development and foreign direct investment, but also via illegal means in the form of secret information theft.[38]

China's civil-military fusion (CMF) policy has been evident in the technology area. China promotes two-way technological exchanges where military technologies are utilized for developing the national economy while civilian technologies are absorbed for national defense development. It also seems interested in absorbing foreign technologies available both for military and civilian purposes. It is pointed out that China's CMF policy in the technology area gives priority to initiatives in seas, outer space, cyber, AI, and other emerging areas for China. It has been pointed out that CMF includes six mutually related efforts: (1) fusion of China's defense industrial base with its civilian technology and industrial base, (2) integration and use of scientific and technological innovation across military and civilian sectors, (3) human resources development and mixing of military and civilian expertise and knowledge, (4) incorporation of military requirements into civilian infrastructure and use of civilian structures for military purposes, (5) use of civilian services and logistics capabilities for military purposes, and (6) expansion and deepening of China's defense mobilization system in a manner that includes all relevant aspects of society and economy for use in competition and war.[39, 40]

In addition, China is believed to be promoting the standardization of civilian products from the production stage for their military adoption under the CMF policy. This initiative is expected to allow the military to more effectively utilize civilian resources. Lately, China has tended to use the phrase of "building Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities" to aid China's goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, rather than emphasizing the wording, "civil-military fusion."

As the growth rate of the defense budget is slowing, the CMF policy is expected to become increasingly important for China, which seeks for greater balance between building up its defense and its economy. In addition, in order to realize the "intelligentized warfare" advocated by China, it is key to acquire advanced civilian technologies, including so-called "game-changing technologies," that would dramatically change future warfare. Therefore, because China's CMF policy is seen as an indispensable means to achieve this, this policy, including its relationship to "intelligentized warfare," must continue to be monitored with serious concern.

See Chapter 4, Section 2-2 (China)

3 Relations with Countries and Regions

1 General Situation

China, particularly regarding maritime issues over which its interests conflict with others', continues to demonstrate its attitude of realizing its unilateral assertions without compromise, while promoting assertive actions including those aimed at unilateral changes to the status quo by force or coercion, based on its own assertions incompatible with the existing international order. China has been promoting its BRI as a national strategy, but some BRI-participating countries have recently begun reconsidering BRI projects due mainly to their fiscal deterioration. It has been further highlighted that China has made moves toward creating its own international order, including the establishment of China-led multilateral mechanisms in fields such as security, growth, and development,[41] as well as moves toward influencing political decisions in other countries through efforts such as winning over foreign politicians.[42]

At the same time, China recognizes that a peaceful and stable international environment is necessary for maintaining sustainable economic development and enhancing China's

38 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoW (2025)
39 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)
40 The existence of the plan to invite to China highly specialized human resources from overseas, including people of Chinese descent, is pointed out. As part of this, for example, it is noted that there are researchers with research experience in Japan who are engaged in the development of wind tunnel test facilities necessary for the development of hypersonic weapons.
41 For example, in April 2022 General Secretary Xi put forward the Global Security Initiative consisting of advocacy of the UN's authority and status, as well as opposition to security build-up of one's own country at the expense of the security of other countries.
42 According to the statement by then Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in December 2017

overall national power. Based on such recognition, China has advocated building a "community of shared future for mankind" and referred to promoting the building of "a new type of international relations based on mutual respect, equity and justice, and win-win cooperation." China proactively carries out military exchanges with other countries. In recent years, China has been engaged in active military exchanges not only with major powers such as the United States and Russia and with its neighboring countries including Southeast Asian countries, but also with countries in Africa and Latin America. Furthermore, movement to strengthen relationships with Pacific countries is observed. The objectives of China's promotion of military exchanges are thought to include alleviating other countries' concerns regarding China by strengthening its relations with these countries, creating a favorable security environment for China, enhancing China's influence in the international community, exploring overseas arms markets, securing stable supplies of natural resources, and ensuring foreign bases.

2 Relations with Russia

Ever since the so-called China-Soviet confrontation ended in 1989, China and Russia have placed importance on their bilateral relationship. They have emphasized the deepening of their relationship since establishing a "strategic partnership" in the mid-1990s. In 2001, the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation was concluded. In 2004, the long-standing issue of border demarcation between the two countries came to a settlement. The two countries have a common view on promoting the multipolarization of the world and the establishment of a new international order, and have further deepened their relations. In the joint statement announced at the China-Russia summit meeting in May 2026, the two countries assessed that China-Russia relations had "reached the highest level in history." Furthermore, 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, three leaders, President Xi, President Putin, and Chairman of the State Affairs Commission Kim Jong-un, were seen standing side by side.



President Xi Jinping, President Putin, and Chairman of the State Affairs Commission Kim Jong-un attending the military parade in September 2025 [China News Service/Jiji Press Photo]

Furthermore, for example, amid growing tensions in U.S.-China and U.S.-Russia relations, China and Russia have consistently deepened their cooperation. Each country is believed to be planning to create an international environment favorable to itself by taking a united stance on security issues, such as Taiwan and issues surrounding NATO's eastern expansion, which are in conflict with the United States and others.

On the military front, since the 1990s, China has purchased modern weapons from Russia, including fighter aircraft, destroyers, and submarines. Russia is currently the largest supplier of weapons to China.[43] Although China-Russia arms transactions in value in recent years have been lower than in some past period, China has apparently continued to indicate its strong interests in importing advanced Russian defense equipment and in joint equipment development with Russia. For example, China has introduced what are believed to be the latest fourth generation Su-35 fighter aircraft and the S-400 surface-to-air missile system from Russia. China has been reported as the first country to import the Russian S-400. Meanwhile, it is also suggested that Russia has concerns about competing with China in arms exports taking into consideration China's improvement of technological power.

Military exchanges between China and Russia take place in such forms as routine mutual visits by senior military officers, as well as joint exercises, joint flights, and joint navigation. Both China and Russia have held the large-scale, joint naval exercise, Maritime Cooperation, since 2012, which includes joint minesweeping drills, blockade operations, raids, and seizure.

Additionally, both China and Russia have implemented mutual participation in military exercises since 2018. The frequency of military cooperation has been increasing, including military from both China and Russia mutually participating in exercises organized by each country in September 2024. China likely regards these exchanges as an opportunity to learn about how to operate Russian-made weapons and the operational doctrine of the Russian Armed Forces, which have combat experiences.

Since 2019, China and Russia have held joint flights over long distances using bombers a total of ten times. The joint flight in May 2022 was with stronger provocation than ever because it was intended to demonstrate force against Japan, which was holding a Japan-U.S.-Australia-India summit meeting at that time. Their activities are seen as diversifying. During joint flights in November 2024, the

43 According to SIPRI Arms Transfers Database

participation of Chinese military air refueling tankers and H-6N bombers reportedly capable of carrying air-launched ballistic missiles that can be equipped with nuclear warheads was confirmed for the first time. Furthermore, in December 2025, Chinese and Russian bombers flew from the East China Sea through the airspace between the main island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island, and, for the first time in a joint flight, conducted a long-distance flight over the Pacific Ocean reaching the waters off Shikoku.

Since 2021, China and Russia have held joint navigations by vessels a total of six times. The joint statement issued after the China-Russia summit meeting in March 2023 specified that the two countries would regularly conduct "joint patrols" and "joint exercises" at sea and in the air. Their activities are seen as diversifying. For example, during the joint navigation in August 2025, the two countries conducted simultaneous joint navigations in two directions for the first time, navigation from the Sea of Japan to the western Pacific Ocean via the Sea of Okhotsk, and navigation from the Sea of Japan to the East China Sea. Submarines also participated in the navigation for the first time.

The repeated joint flights of bombers and joint navigations of vessels between China and Russia are obviously intended as demonstration activities against Japan and are a grave concern for Japan's security.

In this way, China and Russia are demonstrating actions to enhance cooperation further even while aggression against Ukraine is ongoing. There is a possibility for the two countries to enhance military cooperation further, and these developments, including the strengthening of military cooperation between China and Russia, not only have a direct impact on the security environment surrounding Japan, but may also have strategic effects on the United States and Europe, and should be watched with concern.

See Fig. I-3-2-18 (The Main Trends concerning China-Russia Military Cooperation)

Fig. I-3-2-18 The Main Trends concerning China-Russia Military Cooperation

Joint Naval Exercise "Joint Sea"

Time	Exercise area
Apr. 2012	Yellow Sea
Jul. 2013	Sea of Japan
May 2014	East China Sea
May 2015	The Mediterranean Sea
Aug. 2015	Sea of Japan
Sep. 2016	South China Sea
Jul. 2017	Baltic Sea
Sep. 2017	Sea of Japan Sea of Okhotsk
Apr.–May 2019	Yellow Sea
Oct. 2021	Sea of Japan
Dec. 2022	East China Sea
Jul. 2024	South China Sea
Aug. 2025	Sea of Japan

Mutual Participation in Strategic Military Exercises

Time	Name of exercise
2018	Vostok 2018
2019	Tsentr 2019
2020	Kavkaz 2020
2021	Western Joint-2021
2022	Vostok 2022
2023	Northern Joint-2023
2024	Ocean 2024
	Northern Joint-2024

Joint Flights of Bombers

Time	Flight areas
Jul. 2019	Sea of Japan, East China Sea
Dec. 2020	Sea of Japan, East China Sea, Pacific Ocean
Nov. 2021	Sea of Japan, East China Sea, Pacific Ocean
May 2022	Sea of Japan, East China Sea, Pacific Ocean
Nov. 2022	Sea of Japan, East China Sea, Pacific Ocean
Jun. 2023	Sea of Japan, East China Sea, Pacific Ocean
Dec. 2023	Sea of Japan, East China Sea
Jul. 2024	Chukchi Sea, Bering Sea, northern Pacific Ocean
Nov. 2024	Sea of Japan, East China Sea, Pacific Ocean
Dec. 2025	East China Sea, Pacific Ocean

Joint Navigation of Ships

Time	Navigated areas
Oct. 2021	Sea of Japan–(Tsugaru Strait)–western Pacific Ocean–East China Sea
Sep.–Oct. 2022	Sea of Japan–(Soya Strait)–Sea of Okhotsk–Bering Sea–Philippine Sea–East China Sea
Jul.–Aug. 2023	Sea of Japan–(Soya Strait)–Sea of Okhotsk–Bering Sea (bypassing the Aleutian Islands)–Pacific Ocean–East China Sea
Jul. 2024	East China Sea (Jeju Island)–(Osumi Strait)–Philippine Sea–South China Sea
Sep.–Oct. 2024	Sea of Okhotsk–Pacific Ocean–East China Sea
Aug. 2025	Sea of Japan–(Soya Strait)–Sea of Okhotsk–Pacific Ocean Sea of Japan-(Tsushima Strait)-East China Sea

3 Relations with North Korea

China has kept close relations with North Korea under the 1961 Sino-North Korean Mutual Aid and Cooperation Friendship Treaty. In June 2019, General Secretary Xi became the first Chinese president to visit North Korea in 14 years and held his fifth summit meeting with Chairman Kim. In September 2025, General Secretary Xi invited Chairman Kim to the so-called 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 and held the first China-North Korea summit meeting for the first time in approximately six years.

China, while agreeing to UN Security Council resolutions until 2017 to enhance sanctions on North Korea, cooperated with Russia in proposing a draft resolution including lifting some of the sanctions based on UN Security Council resolutions in 2019. In May 2022, China exercised its power of veto with Russia to a draft resolution for sanctions proposed by the United States in response to North Korea's launching of ICBM-class ballistic missiles.

Although China has vowed to have seriously observed its international obligations, it has been pointed out that Chinese ships have been involved in illicit ship-to-ship transfer prohibited by the UN Security Council resolutions.

4 Relations with Other Countries

(1) Relations with Australia and Pacific Island Countries

See Section 6-1-3 (2) (Relations with China), Section 6-3 (Pacific Island Countries)

(2) Relations with Southeast Asian Countries

See Section 7-2 (Security and Defense Policies of Each Country)

(3) Relations with South Asian Countries

See Section 8-1-3 (2) (Relations with China), Section 8-2-3 (2) (Relations with China)

(4) Relations with European Countries

See Section 9-2-3 (Relations with China)

(5) Relations with African Countries

See Section 10-2-2 (1) (China and Russia)

5 International Transfer of Weapons

China is expanding its exports of missiles, tanks, aircraft including drones, and vessels, and was the world's fourth-largest arms exporter in the decade from 2015 to 2024. Specifically, China's major arms export destinations are believed to include Pakistan and Bangladesh, but it is also said to export weapons to Algeria, Nigeria, and other African countries, countries in Southeast Asia such as Thailand and Myanmar, and Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia.[44]

Some claim that China has transferred weapons to foreign countries in order to strengthen its strategic relationships with friendly nations, enhance its influence in the international community, and secure natural resources. China has not participated in some of the frameworks for international arms export control, and some point out that missile-related and other technologies have been transferred from China to other countries.

44 According to SIPRI Arms Transfers Database

Perspective

Chinese Military Trends Concerning Taiwan

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In recent years, the Chinese military has been intensifying its military activities in the area around Taiwan using combat aircraft and warships. There was no change to this trend in 2025 either; on the contrary, those actions seem to have been reinforced. In particular, the large-scale Chinese military exercises Strait Thunder-2025A, held in April, and Justice Mission-2025, held in late December, have drawn significant attention from the international community.

It can be pointed out that the characteristics of military activities by the Chinese military in the area around Taiwan consist of the following three points: "combat readiness," which means it conducts practical training with a Taiwan contingency in mind, "propaganda," which means it actively provides information about the details of the training in a form which mixes together truths and falsehoods, and "normalization" which means that in addition to conducting large-scale exercises, it is also continuously developing a variety of other military activities in the area around Taiwan.

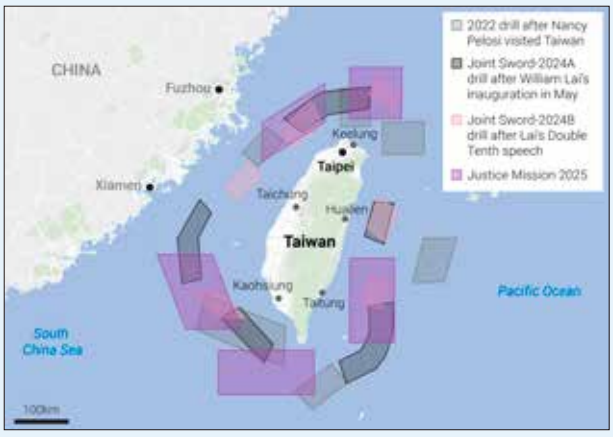
From the perspective of combat readiness, the following points are of interest: (i) joint operations training in anticipation of precision guided attacks on the major cities and ports of Taiwan, (ii) joint sea and airspace blockade operations training targeting Taiwan, (iii) law enforcement training by the China Coast Guard coordinated with the military, (iv) simulation training of "decapitation strikes" targeting Taiwanese leaders and key targets, and similar. In particular, the Chinese military is gradually increasing the exercise sites in (ii) and aiming to reinforce its blockade systems (below figure). China is reinforcing a variety of capabilities with a Taiwan contingency in mind.

From the perspective of propaganda, the points that gained attention include (i) the distribution of videos through official announcements by the Chinese military and state-run media, (ii) explanations about the details and purposes of the exercises and assertions about the legality of conducting the exercises by researchers affiliated with Chinese military research institutes, and (iii) criticism of the Lai Ching-te administration by the spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of National Defense. Concerning (i), a video released by the Eastern Theater Command included footage that appeared to show a J-20 stealth fighter approaching an air base in southern Taiwan, as well as footage that appeared to show drones approaching Taipei's TAIPEI 101 building. Taiwanese officials deny that these events ever happened, claiming that they are part of "cognitive warfare" used to intimidate Taiwan. By actively providing information in a form that blends fact and fiction, China is intending to put pressure on Taiwan and the international community and foment division within Taiwan.

As for the point regarding normalization, (i) military activities in the area around Taiwan undertaken by Chinese combat aircraft and naval vessels on a continuous and routine basis outside of large-scale exercises, (ii) the claims made by Chinese military researchers during the April exercise that such activities have become routine, and similar matters have gained attention. China is adjusting the intensity of these normalized military activities and immediately conducting large-scale exercises in response to Taiwan's statements regarding China and developments in U.S.-Taiwan relations. A pretext given for conducting April's Strait Thunder-2025A was President Lai Ching-te declaring China a "foreign hostile force," while a pretext given for December's Justice Mission-2025 was U.S. arms exports to Taiwan.

It is believed that the objectives of the military activities by the Chinese military in the area around Taiwan are the following. The first objective is to strongly criticize the Lai Ching-te administration which is considered to be more in favor of Taiwanese independence than the Tsai Ing-wen administration. The second objective is to restrain the United States, which is reinforcing its security relationship with Taiwan. The third objective is to further divide Taiwanese society and isolate the Lai Ching-te administration by combining a hardline stance of military action with a moderate stance centered on promoting economic relations between China and Taiwan.

This strengthening of military pressure on Taiwan by the Chinese military amounts to an attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion, and there are concerns that it could lead to destabilization of the security environment in the Indo-Pacific region. For that reason, it is necessary for Japan to continue to closely monitor these moves by the Chinese military.



(Figure) Comparison of the Military Exercise Locations of the Chinese Military in the Area around Taiwan (Created by Author)

(Note) This column is an independent analysis from the researcher's academic perspective, and its contents do not represent an official government position.

Section 3 Relations between the United States and China, Etc.

1 Relations between the United States and China (General Situation)

With regard to the relationship between the United States, the world's largest economic power, and China, the second largest, competitions between the two countries across the political, economic, and military realms have become increasingly apparent in recent years. This is due to various concerns such as changes in the balance of power caused by China's growing national power, trade issues, issues concerning the South China Sea, the Taiwan issue, the Hong Kong issue, and human rights issues in China regarding Uighur and Tibet. In particular, since the first Trump administration, the moves of the United States and China that had kept each other in check have come to the surface. Subsequently, there has been strong interest in the irreversible developments in the strategic competition between the two countries.

In December 2025, the second Trump administration released its National Security Strategy (NSS). Concerning China, it stated that previous attempts to facilitate China's entry into the so-called "rules-based international order" were a mistake, and mentioned that the United States would rebalance its economic relationship with China, prioritizing reciprocity and fairness to restore American economic independence.

The National Defense Strategy (NDS) released in January 2026 states that China is already the second most powerful country in the world, presents the perception that the speed, scale, and quality of China's military buildup is historic, and then presents the idea that the United States will build and maintain strong denial defense along the First Island Chain, collaborate with its allies and partners to enhance the effectiveness of collective defense, establish deterrence, and maintain a favorable balance of military power in the Indo-Pacific to ensure that neither China nor anyone else can dominate the United States or its allies.

Taking a strict attitude toward China is becoming common nonpartisan policy. For example, a nonpartisan Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party was established in January 2023 and a resolution to extend the committee's term, which was originally scheduled to be until the end of 2024, until the end of 2026 was passed in the U.S. House of Representatives in January 2025.

On the other hand, regarding this posture of the United States, China says that it desires stable development of U.S.-China relations while at the same time emphasizing that it will resolutely defend its own sovereignty, security, and development interests, and resisting the U.S. posture, saying that the United States should stop portraying China as a military threat and whipping up antagonism among opposing camps. China shows a non-compromising attitude over its own "core interests and material concerns," and uses special caution regarding involvement with the United States especially in regard to Taiwan issues that China values as "the core of core interests." When Nancy Pelosi, then Speaker of the House of Representatives, visited Taiwan in August 2022, China conducted large scale military exercises in various areas around Taiwan, and showed an uncompromising attitude against the United States. For example, China announced countermeasures that included suspending various discussions between the two countries. Furthermore, when the United States decided in December 2025 to carry out what is said to be its largest ever weapons sale to Taiwan, China expressed its opposition later in the same month by conducting large-scale military exercises around Taiwan, among other responses.

Exchanges between the United States and China, including between their military authorities, slowed down against the backdrop of House Speaker Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August 2022 and the detection and downing by the U.S. military of a Chinese reconnaissance balloon over U.S. homeland airspace in February 2023, but efforts have been made to resume exchanges since then. In November 2023, then President Biden held a summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping for the first time in about a year. They agreed to resume high-level dialogue between military authorities, which the Chinese side appears to have suspended in response to the shooting down of its spy balloon. Additionally, they agreed to resume consultations between their military authorities, which had been suspended by China as a countermeasure when House Speaker Pelosi visited Taiwan.

Under the second Trump administration, immediately after inauguration of the administration, the United States imposed additional tariffs on China, citing the influx of fentanyl and other illicit substances as the reason for the tariffs. It also imposed reciprocal tariffs designed to correct trade imbalances. China retaliated with countermeasures, including additional tariffs on the United States and strengthened export controls on rare earth-related items. In this context, in June 2025, the first U.S.-China Summit Meeting since the inauguration of the administration was held in the form of a telephone summit. The leaders primarily consulted on trade issues, and in addition President Xi conveyed his firm position on the Taiwan issue. Subsequently, retaliations between the United States and China continued, including China's announcement of strengthening of export controls on new rare earth-related items. However, in October of the same year, following a summit in the Republic of Korea (ROK)

and economic consultations in Malaysia, an agreement was reached to lower the additional tariffs by the United States and to suspend China's measures strengthening export controls on some rare earth elements for one year. In May of this year, President Trump visited China as President of the United States for the first time in about eight and a half years and held a U.S.-China Summit Meeting with President Xi. The two leaders exchanged views on U.S.-China relations, economic and trade issues, and developments in the Middle East, among other matters. Both sides made certain efforts to ease tensions, with the U.S. side stating that President Xi and his spouse were invited to the White House in September 2026, and the Chinese side announcing that President Xi would accept the invitation and visit the United States in the autumn of 2026. Future developments will warrant close attention.

Moreover, regarding exchanges between the military authorities of the United States and China, in September 2025, the first U.S.-China defense ministerial meeting after the inauguration of the second Trump administration was held in the form of a video conference. Subsequently, in October of the same year, in the U.S.-China defense ministerial meeting in Malaysia, U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth expressed concern at the activities of China in the Indo-Pacific region, including the South China Sea and the area around Taiwan, and communicated the fact that the United States would continue to protect its interests going forward. The two sides agreed on the need to establish channels of communication between their two militaries to avoid conflicts. In addition, the Defense Policy Coordination Talks (DPCT), Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA) meeting and other meetings have been held. Regarding exchanges between the military authorities of the United States and China, the U.S. Department of War has stated that it remains committed to maintaining open lines of communication with China for risk mitigation and crisis management.[1]

Meanwhile, in the field of sensitive technologies and critical technologies, where U.S.-China competition is particularly conspicuous, the United States has become increasingly wary of China. China promotes the "intelligentization" of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) through the use of cutting-edge technologies; for example, General Secretary Xi of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), stated in his report in the 20th CCP Congress in October 2022 that China "holds fast to merge and develop mechanization, informatization, and intelligentization." Based on these movements, the then Biden administration put effort into protecting and fostering sensitive and key technologies, recognizing that U.S. security will be threatened as a result of the strengthening of Chinese military power due to leakage of such technologies from the United States and its allies. During the second Trump administration, in March 2025, the United States added business entities in China and other countries to the Entity List,[2] making them subject to regulations on exports from the United States, in order to restrict the CCP's acquisition of high-performance computing capabilities and quantum technology that could be used for military purposes and hinder its development of hypersonic weapons. On the other hand, in May of the same year, the United States repealed the regulations strengthening export controls on semiconductors for artificial intelligence (AI) that had been established by the former Biden administration, on the grounds that they were hindering U.S. innovation. In September of the same year, the United States also announced measures to expand the application of export regulations to subsidiaries of business entities named on the Entity List, but taking into account the U.S.-China Summit Meeting held at the end of October of the same year, it decided to suspend these measures for one year from November 10. China has criticized these U.S. initiatives as a malicious blockade against Chinese companies and, since 2020, has enforced a series of laws and regulations which constitute countermeasures to the strengthening of regulations by the United States and other foreign countries.

Furthermore, the United States has stated that it is wary of China regarding critical minerals, including rare earth elements essential for military equipment and advanced technology products. China has responded to the tariffs imposed on it by the second Trump administration by announcing the countermeasure of strengthening export controls on rare earth-related items, so stably securing rare earths and other critical minerals has become an issue. In this context, the United States has signed cooperation documents on critical minerals with countries such as Japan, Australia, Thailand, and Malaysia, and has actively pursued external cooperation toward rebuilding critical mineral supply chains, including participating in the adoption of the Critical Minerals Action Plan at the G7. Furthermore, in the NSS published in December of the same year, the United States positioned the expansion of access to critical minerals as an essential concrete measure for economic security.

Competition in the technology and critical minerals field between the United States and China is likely to intensify further in the future as both sides continue to reciprocate each other's efforts to set forth new regulations. For example, the United States made a move to enhance bilateral and multilateral cooperation, the effects of which can be seen to be spreading internationally.

1 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoW (2025)

2 The Entity List is a list of companies and others designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) as having national security or foreign policy-related concerns under the Export Administration Regulations. Exports, etc. of goods, software, or technologies necessary for production or development to companies and other entities on the list require authorization from the BIS.

2 Military Trends of the United States and China in the Indo-Pacific Region

1 General Situation

The second Trump administration, in the NSS, which presented its commitment to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), stated that it would build a military capable of denying aggression anywhere in the First Island Chain, and in addition would focus on pressing its allies and partners to allow the U.S. military greater access to their ports and other facilities, to increase their own defense spending, and most importantly to invest in capabilities aimed at deterring aggression.

Furthermore, the NDS advocates deterring China in the Indo-Pacific through strength, not confrontation. The Department of War, while placing importance on strategic stability, deconfliction, and de-escalation, stated it would engage in broader forms of dialogue with its Chinese military counterparts, while also erecting and maintaining a strong denial defense along the First Island Chain, urging and enabling key regional allies and partners to do more for our collective defense, and maintaining the ability to conduct devastating strikes and operations against targets anywhere in the world, including directly from the U.S. homeland.

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2026 continues to place importance on deterring China, etc. as in the previous year. It includes initiatives aimed at strengthening the posture and capabilities of U.S. Forces in the Indo-Pacific, such as extension of the Pacific Deterrence Initiative to enhance the deterrence and defense posture of U.S. Forces in the Indo-Pacific region and increased investment in the innovative technologies necessary to deter China, such as hypersonic technologies, AI, autonomous systems, cyber technologies, and others.

See Section 1-1-2 (Defense Policies)

Regarding relations with Japan, in the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting during President Trump's visit to Japan in October 2025, the two leaders concurred to advance a broad range of security cooperation in order to further enhance the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. They acknowledged Japan's significant strengthening of its defense capabilities and mentioned that Japan and the United States are "an ally at the strongest level." In addition, in the Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting in January 2026, the Ministers confirmed and agreed to make further efforts for expansion of their bilateral joint presence in the southwestern region of Japan and to work more closely together with regard to defense equipment and technology cooperation.

On the other hand, China resists this U.S. posture, saying that the United States should stop portraying China as a military threat and whipping up antagonism among opposing camps. It is seen that China is wary of the growth of initiatives, such as those by Japan, the United States, Australia, and India, into strong alliances, as well as with the growing involvement of the United States in the Indo-Pacific region. Furthermore, the military power balance between the United States and China in the Indo-Pacific region is changing because China is rapidly strengthening its military power against a background of economic growth and other factors. China is out of the framework of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) and has been enhancing ground-launched missile power unilaterally. Although the United States has insisted that China should be included in arms control negotiations and expressed its intention to apply certain brakes to China's missile power build-up, China consistently refuses to participate in negotiations,[3] asserting that it is maintaining its own nuclear forces at the minimum level necessary for its national security and that its nuclear forces are nowhere near the same scale as those of the United States and Russia.

The changes in the military power balance between the United States and China can affect peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region. Thus, the U.S.-China military trends in the region including the South China Sea and Taiwan will require further attention.

2 South China Sea

With regard to the issues over the South China Sea, the United States is concerned about such dimensions as obstruction to the freedom of navigation in sea lines of communication, restrictions on the activities of U.S. Forces, and the worsening security situation in the entire region. The United States has requested China to comply with international norms, and has repeatedly criticized China's unilateral and assertive actions. On the other hand, China expresses opposition saying the United States is the largest threat to peace and stability in the South China Sea, and confrontation between these two countries is deepening.

China has been advancing into the South China Sea by taking advantage of the power vacuum there since the 1950s, and promoting the militarization of the Paracel Islands. It has also been conducting rapid reclamation of the Spratly Islands on a large scale since 2014. Even after the illegality of the Chinese activities such as land reclamation was determined at the Philippines-China arbitration in 2016, China has made it clear that it would not comply with the decision and has been promoting its plan to militarize the area.

3 According to the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China on February 5, 2026

See Section 2-2-6 (5) (Trends of Activities in the South China Sea), Section 7 (Southeast Asia)

The United States has been condemning China's action about issues concerning the South China Sea hitherto and has conducted Freedom of Navigation Operations and other activities. The second Trump administration also highlighted in the NSS the importance of the South China Sea from economic and security perspectives, stating that strong measures must be developed along with the deterrence necessary to ensure that this sea area is not subject to arbitrary closure by one country.

In response to the clashes between the Philippines and China that have continued even after the Philippines-China arbitration award, the United States again issued a statement demanding that China comply with the obligations of international law. In addition, in January 2022, the U.S. Department of State released a study examining China's maritime claims in the South China Sea in light of international law. The study concluded that China's claims over most of the South China Sea are inconsistent with international law and gravely undermine the rule of law in the ocean. In February 2023, during a defense ministerial meeting between the United States and the Philippines, the two countries agreed to add four new cooperation bases within the Philippines, in addition to the existing five, under the "Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA)" to facilitate the rotational deployment of U.S. Forces. In addition, since April 2024, the United States has been deploying its ground-launched, mid-range missile system Typhon in the Philippines. In this way, the administration is showing its stance to further enhance cooperation with countries bordering the South China Sea.

Additionally, the United States has enhanced military efforts in the South China Sea. It has continuously conducted the Freedom of Navigation Operations, carried out joint exercises in July 2020 by deploying two Carrier Strike Groups for the first time since 2014, and subsequently conducted similar exercises several times in order to confront excessive claims by China and other countries over maritime interests. The United States has also conducted joint training with partner countries including Japan, the United Kingdom, Australia, the Netherlands, Canada, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Responding to these American efforts, China has criticized the United States for hindering the peace and stability of the region.

Going forward, while forming a free and open order based on the rule of law is important in the South China Sea, the military tensions may rise. Japan, which promotes a FOIP with the United States, will have to pay great attention to the situation.

3 Taiwan

China upholds the principle that Taiwan is a part of China and that the Taiwan issue is its internal affair. China maintains that the "One China" principle is the underlying premise and foundation for dialogue between China and Taiwan. China is also strongly opposed to any foreign intervention in the unification of China as well as any move toward the independence of Taiwan and has repeatedly stated that it has not renounced the use of force in respect of the Taiwan issue. "The Anti-Secession Law," enacted in March 2005, clearly lays out China's policy of not renouncing the use of force, providing that in the event that possibilities for a peaceful reunification should be completely exhausted, the state shall employ nonpeaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. General Secretary Xi stated in the report to the 20th CCP Congress held in October 2022, in respect of cross-strait issues, China's position to "continue to strive for peaceful reunification with the greatest sincerity and the utmost effort" while he stated again "resolving the Taiwan issue and realizing China's complete reunification is a natural requirement for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" and "we will never promise to renounce the use of force, and we reserve the option of taking all measures necessary."

On the other hand, in its NSS the United States points out that Taiwan provides direct access to the Second Island Chain and splits Northeast and Southeast Asia into two distinct theaters. The NSS also states that deterring a conflict over Taiwan, ideally by preserving military overmatch, is a priority, and that the United States does not support any unilateral change to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. Furthermore, the importance of "peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait" has been mentioned on various occasions including Japan-U.S. Summit Meetings. In addition, the administration has been exhibiting the stance of supporting Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations.

In addition, the United States has decided to sell arms to Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act, and in December 2025, it decided to sell weapons totaling approximately USD 11.1 billion, including M109A7 155 mm self-propelled howitzer, M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS), drones, and other weapons. This is the second sale under the second Trump administration and is considered to be the largest single weapons sale to Taiwan in terms of value in history. Furthermore, in addition to these arms sales, the United States and Taiwan are reportedly cooperating on military training,[4] and the United States regularly conducts transits of the Taiwan Strait using naval vessels and aircraft.

Moreover, not only the U.S. government but also the

4 Then President Tsai Ing-wen acknowledged that the U.S. military was visiting Taiwan for training purposes in an interview with U.S. media in October 2021. In March 2023, then U.S. Secretary of Defense Austin testified at a congressional hearing that the U.S. National Guard was training Taiwan's military.

U.S. Congress has indicated its intention to further enhance support for Taiwan. It is said that congressional delegations of the United States including Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Pelosi, visited Taiwan repeatedly and met with then President Tsai Ing-wen and others, and exchanged views on strengthening U.S.-Taiwan relations and other matters during 2022. In 2025, members of the U.S. Congress visited Taiwan and met with President Lai Ching-te and other officials. The NDAA also presents the stance of strengthening support for Taiwan. The NDAA for Fiscal Year 2026 includes a provision for a maximum contribution of USD 1 billion (an increase from USD 300 million in the previous fiscal year) to the Taiwan security cooperation initiative, which was established in the previous fiscal year with the objective of maintaining the self-defense capacity of Taiwan and enables the provision of defense supplies and services to Taiwan. The NDAA also includes provisions for promotion of cooperation in unmanned systems and cooperation between the U.S. Coast Guard and the Taiwan Coast Guard Administration.

In response to this proximity between the United States and Taiwan, China has further stepped up its military activities around Taiwan, including conducting military exercises around it when VIPs from the United States and Taiwan visited each other and on other similar occasions.

See Section 2-2-6 (4) (Trends of Activities around Taiwan)

While the United States is maintaining its stance of continuing to support Taiwan in the military-related area, it is deemed unlikely that China, which positions Taiwan issues as "the core of the core interests," will show a compromising attitude toward the U.S. stance. Stabilizing the situation surrounding Taiwan is important for the stability of the international community. Therefore, it is necessary for Japan to pay close attention to the situation with a sense of crisis more than ever before.

3 Military Capabilities of Taiwan and Military Balance between China and Taiwan

1 Relations with China

President Lai of the Democratic Progressive Party, who took office in May 2024, has declared his stance on cross-strait relations at every opportunity; namely, he wants to maintain the status quo and seek exchanges and dialogue on an equal footing, while rejecting the "One China" principle and "1992 Consensus"[5] claimed by China. Furthermore, in March 2025, President Lai labelled China a "foreign hostile force" for the first time, and in addition, in November of the same year, he stated that Taiwan's security was a "struggle about defending 'democratic Taiwan' and refusing to submit and become 'Taiwan, China'" and presented a stance of bolstering Taiwan's defense capabilities. He also reiterated that the "one country, two systems" model that China intends to apply to Taiwan is unacceptable, saying that the "'One country, two systems' model crosses a red line."

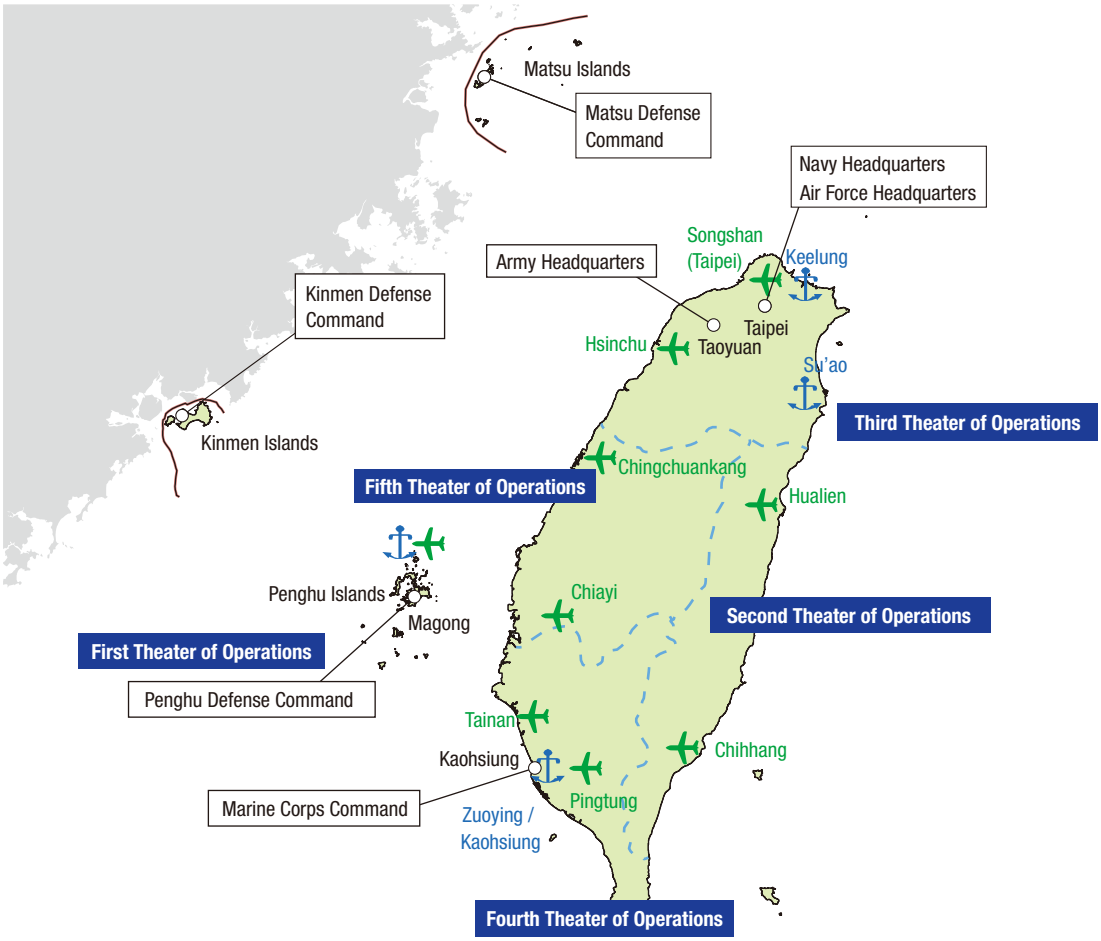
Even after the inauguration of the Lai administration, there has continued to be no dialogue between the Chinese and Taiwanese authorities, while China continues to exert pressure on Taiwan in various areas. On the military front, China has intensified its everyday military activities, including increasing the number of Chinese military aircraft entering the airspace surrounding Taiwan, and has conducted military exercises around Taiwan when President Lai has made statements regarding Taiwan's sovereignty. Furthermore, in June 2024, the Chinese government issued judicial guidelines under which the death penalty may be imposed as the maximum punishment for "acts of secession committed by diehard 'Taiwan independence' separatists." It also continued to add people, including Taiwan Vice President Hsiao Bi-khim, to its list of "diehard 'Taiwan independence' separatists," and suspended the preferential tariff measures under the cross-strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) for 134 items from Taiwan, including its petrochemical products. Moreover, in September of the same year, it added pressure in political and economic areas, for example by suspending tariff exemptions for 34 Taiwanese agricultural and fishery products.

In regard to relations between the international community and Taiwan, since around the inauguration of former President Tsai, Taiwanese delegates have been repeatedly refused attendance at, or had their invitations deferred from, meetings held by international organizations, including ones in which they had participated up to that point.[6] Furthermore, Nauru severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan in January 2024 and established diplomatic relations with China, reducing the number of countries with which Taiwan has diplomatic relations from 22 when the Tsai administration first took office in May 2016 to 12. The Taiwanese authorities have strongly protested against these moves, describing them as "China's attempt to compress Taiwan's international space."

5 The "1992 Consensus" refers to what represents a common understanding reached between Chinese and Taiwanese authorities in 1992 on the "One-China" principle. The CCP and Taiwan's Kuomintang Nationalist Party (Taiwan's ruling party at the time), viewed as parties to the consensus, have reportedly differed over the interpretation of the principle. In addition, Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party has clarified that it has not accepted the "1992 Consensus."

6 According to the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan on September 24, 2019

Fig. I-3-3-1 Placement of Taiwan Military



2 Taiwan's Military Power and Defense Strategy

With regard to Taiwan's military power, at present, ground forces, including the Marine Corps, have a total of approximately 106,000 personnel. The Taiwan military divides the main island of Taiwan and the Penghu Islands into five theaters of operation, with Army Corps and other units in charge of command and management of each theater of operation. In addition, it is assessed that approximately 1.66 million reserve personnel of the air, naval, and ground forces would be available in case of war. In 2022, the All-out Defense Mobilization Agency was established to integrate the reserve forces and public and private organizations involved in wartime mobilization to optimize the efficiency of the mobilization system in the event of an emergency. Regarding naval capabilities, in addition to Kidd-class destroyers which were imported from the United States, Taiwan possesses the indigenously built Tuo Chiang stealth corvette, among other vessels. Taiwan is currently promoting indigenous shipbuilding programs to independently build its own military vessels, which includes plans to build 11 mass-produced Tuo Chiang-class corvettes by 2026 and ultimately about eight submarines, including the first submarine, which was launched in September 2023. Regarding air capabilities, Taiwan possesses F-16 fighter aircraft (F-16V upgraded from F-16A/B), Mirage 2000 fighter aircraft, Ching-kuo fighter aircraft, and other assets. In November 2021, Taiwan's first unit composed of F-16V fighter aircraft upgraded from F-16A/B fighter aircraft was established at Chiayi Air Base, and the deployment of fighter aircraft capable of carrying longer-range missiles is being strengthened, including the new F-16V fighter aircraft introduced from the United States.

In January 2024, Taiwan extended the obligatory military service for males of conscription age (18 to 36 years old) from the previous four months to one year. The Army formed seven new infantry brigades, primarily consisting of compulsorily conscripted soldiers, for a total of 12 brigades by 2023, and began accepting soldiers with one-year mandatory conscription from January 2024. The new conscription system has strengthened the training content beyond what was required under the previous military training obligations,

specifically requiring enhanced training in operating new equipment and participation in practical training. Furthermore, in the same year, President Lai established the "Whole-of-Society Defense Resilience Committee" with the objective of building the capacity for the government and society to maintain normal operations even in emergencies, with natural disasters and China's military threat in mind. This committee aims to enhance the overall resilience of society by strengthening cooperation between the government and private sectors in the following areas: civilian force training; strategic material preparation and critical supply distribution; energy and critical infrastructure operations and maintenance; social welfare, medical care, and evacuation facility readiness; and information, transportation, and financial network protection. Regarding the training in particular, the committee has set the goal of securing a "reliable civilian defense force" of 400,000 people and is integrating several conventional civilian-participation exercises, such as air defense exercises, into "Urban Resilience Exercises" in which participants have been training in subjects such as air defense, mobilization, and infrastructure protection throughout Taiwan since 2025.

On the other hand, since China has consistently expressed its intention of not renouncing the use of force to Taiwan, the country may make a decision on military options such as air and maritime blockade, limited use of force, air and missile operations, and invasion of Taiwan. If that happens, it is deemed that China will deter or delay any potential interventions by the United States. According to media reports, an unpublished report submitted by the Ministry of National Defense of Taiwan to the Legislative Yuan in December 2021 outlines the following process for an invasion of Taiwan by China: In the initial stage, China would concentrate its troops along the Chinese coast under the guise of exercises, employ "cognitive warfare" to cause panic among the Taiwanese people, and then concentrate its naval vessels in the Western Pacific to prevent foreign military intervention. Then, naval vessels would be gathered in the Western Pacific to prevent foreign military intervention. Next, under the strategy of transformation from exercises to war, the Rocket and Air Forces would launch ballistic and cruise missiles to attack Taiwan's key military facilities, while the then Strategic Support Forces would carry out cyberattacks on Taiwan's key military systems. Finally, after gaining sea and air superiority, landing operations by amphibious assault ships, transport helicopters, and more will be carried out, thus achieving total control of Taiwan before foreign forces intervene.

Furthermore, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) published by the Ministry of National Defense of Taiwan in March 2025 indicated combat patterns are changing in the Taiwan Strait; specifically, that it is becoming more difficult to clearly identify signs of invasion by the Chinese military, that the transition from peacetime to wartime has become relatively rapid and ambiguous, that China's development of long-range precision strike capabilities is blurring the boundary between the front and the rear, and that after the outbreak of the conflict, China will employ traditional, hybrid, and irregular warfare forces to inflict multi-domain attacks on Taiwan.

In response to such moves of China, Taiwan has put forth a defense strategy called "Resolute Defense and Multi-domain Deterrence" which seeks to prevent or foil an invasion by the Chinese military through establishing a multi-layered defense posture, which combines major equipment such as fighter aircraft and vessels with asymmetric force, in order to restrict the Chinese military at the farthest points possible, while reinforcing homeland defense and collaborating with international partners, including the United States. Regarding this strategy, the ROC National Defense Report 2023 added the new item of "Defense in Depth" and its descriptive content is mainly as follows:

- Firstly, it states that Taiwan will monitor obvious indicators of enemy invasion and preemptively strike its mobilizing invasion forces. This is seen to be an attempt to delay the enemy invasion and secure lead time for building a defense posture by using long-range fire strikes on enemy assembly locations.
- Furthermore, the report states that at the stage when enemy units are moving at sea, Taiwan will reduce the enemy by naval vessels, missiles, and unmanned vehicles taking advantage of the enemy's vulnerability when crossing the sea, and in addition it states that Taiwan will stop the enemy at the coast by using border obstacles.
- Concerning homeland defense, the report states that Taiwan will conduct defense operations utilizing the terrain, urban environment, etc., and in addition that it will strengthen the fighting capability of compulsory conscripts and reserve forces and the whole-of-society defense capacity at wartime.
- In addition, it stipulates extension of the defense space in coordination with deployment of the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy. If this is based on the fact that the report indicates that Taiwan, located at a key position on the First Island Chain, occupies an important strategic position for the Indo-Pacific defense postures of the United States and others while stating for the first time that Taiwan will improve interoperability to respond to the threat of China, there is a possibility that Taiwan intends to collaborate with U.S. Forces deployed near the First Island Chain to attempt to stop and restrict the PLA crossing the First Island Chain, thereby securing access to the outside world and a route for U.S. Forces to come into the region.

Furthermore, the ROC National Defense Report 2025 maintained a strategy of "resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence," while specifying that "regular crisis management, combat readiness deployment, joint anti-landing, littoral, and coastal combat, defense-in-depth, and protracted war" were the specific operational stages. It presents the principle of weakening the enemy to prevent the enemy from seizing key positions, and also emphasizes strengthening whole-of-

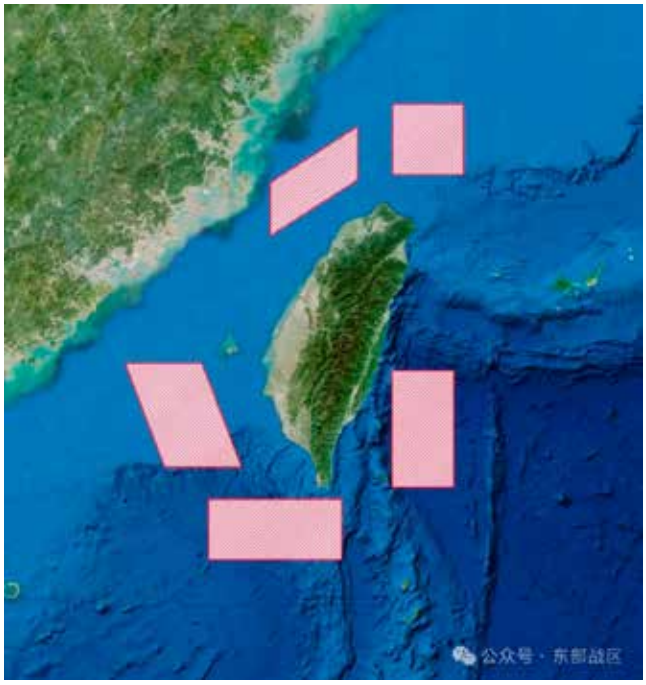
society resilience through military-civilian integration, thereby maintaining core functions of society and the continued operation of the government, and strengthening security relations and joint actions with friendly nations, with the United States in mind.

In order to accomplish "Resolute Defense and Multi-domain Deterrence," Taiwan is expanding the development and production of domestically-produced asymmetric force and long-range weapons and is also advancing the introduction of weapons from the United States. Taiwan is currently strengthening its domestic development of sea and air capabilities, long-range missiles, and the like. It formulated a special budget of approximately TWD 240 billion over the five years from 2022 to 2026 in order to acquire self-developed equipment for the expansion of sea and air capabilities. In addition to these, Taiwan has formulated a special budget of approximately TWD 250 billion over the seven years from 2020 to 2026 for procurement of the F-16V fighter aircraft from the United States, and in addition has decided to acquire equipment such as M1A2T Abrams main battle tank, M142 (HIMARS), RGM-84L-4 (Harpoon) surface-to-ship missile system, AGM-84H Standoff Land Attack Missile Expanded Response (SLAM-ER) long-range air-to-surface missile, Switchblade and Altius drones, and National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NASAMS) from the United States.

In addition, in October 2025, President Lai mentioned for the first time that Taiwan would build the T-Dome, a multi-layered air defense system with high-level detection and effective interception. The Minister of National Defense of Taiwan has stated that Taiwan will integrate this with the existing air defense system to realize an effective multi-layered air defense structure.

In addition to this, Taiwan annually conducts the "Han Kuang" large-scale military exercise that simulates an invasion by Chinese forces. It is believed that the Taiwan military's defense strategy has been tested through this series of drills. In recent Han Kuang exercises, training exercises, such as anti-landing and interception drills, as well as training focused on gray zone strategies, such as cyber warfare and joint training between the Navy and the Coast Guard, have been conducted. In the 2025 "Han Kuang 41" exercise, the exercise duration was expanded from about five days to ten days, and in addition to training in anti-landings, air defense, and infrastructure protection, gray zone responses,[7] including rapid combat readiness, strategic communication, and information safeguarding, were added to the main exercise. In addition to this, it appears that the defense strategy was verified through exercises, including the first-ever incorporation of the "defense-in-depth and protracted war" operational phases, combat training utilizing inland terrain including urban areas, and the aforementioned civilian-participation "Urban Resilience Exercises" conducted in conjunction with "Han Kuang 41."

Taiwan is also becoming increasingly wary of China's pursuit of reunification through military activities in the gray zone. For example, the ROC National Defense Report 2023 pointed out that since 2022, China's military actions against Taiwan have become more frequent and diverse, including the crossing of the "median line" of the Taiwan Strait by Chinese military assets, the establishment of a no-sail/no-fly zone around Taiwan, and practical military exercises, and it pointed out that China is stepping up its threats against Taiwan to disrupt public sentiment there, with the intention of promoting reunification and forcing Taiwan to take part in negotiations toward reunification.



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

Furthermore, the ROC National Defense Report 2025 points out that the PLA's military exercises targeting Taiwan in the past two years have all focused on blocking Taiwan's air and sea lines of communication. It has been pointed out that blockade is one means for China to force the reunification of Taiwan,[8] and training in blockades is also included in the exercises conducted by China in the sea areas surrounding Taiwan. In the May 2024 exercises, activities in a form coordinated with exercises by the China Coast Guard (CCG) were announced for the first time, and since then, during military exercises in the area surround Taiwan, the CCG has announced that it has conducted boarding, inspection and seizure drills and law enforcement patrols in the area surrounding Taiwan. Taking into account these facts, there is

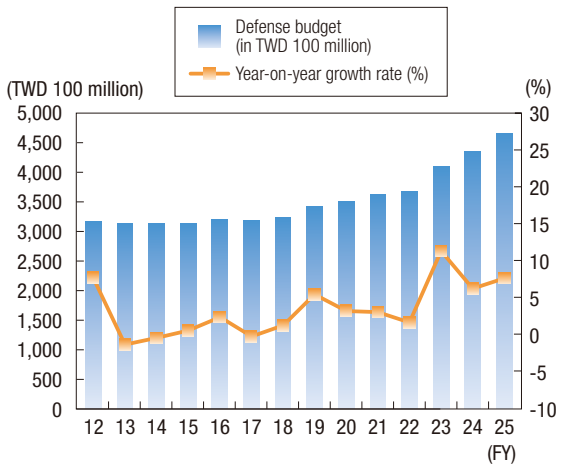
7 In the 2024 "Han Kuang 40" exercise, a two-day gray zone response period was established before commencement of the exercise.
8 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoW (2025)

a possibility that in a Taiwan blockading operation China may deploy its CCG vessels to the front to carry out a blockade in the gray zone, with the aim of avoiding military intervention by the United States or other third countries. There is also a possibility that China may be intending to promptly transition to an invasion of Taiwan and to prevent intervention by U.S. Forces in response to the invasion.

3 Military Balance between China and Taiwan

As of the end of May 2026, Taiwan's FY2026 defense expenditure has not been released. However, Taiwan's FY2025 defense expenditure (defense authorities budget) was approximately TWD 473.9 billion, while on the other hand China's publicly announced FY2025 defense expenditure was approximately RMB 1.784665 trillion. When converted to U.S. dollars using the exchange rates announced by the Taiwanese Central Bank, this figure is approximately 17 times that of Taiwan. It is pointed out that China's actual defense expenditure has been larger than the published defense budget, indicating that the China-Taiwan defense expenditure gap could be greater.

Fig. I-3-3-2 Changes in the Taiwan's Defense Authority Budget



(Note) the website of the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan.

In this context, in August 2025, the Lai administration approved in Cabinet a budget proposal for the FY2026 national defense budget for a total amount of approximately TWD 949.5 billion, 3.32% of GDP, which included the defense authorities budget, special budgets, and funds. This budget proposal incorporates a substantial special budget for national defense, and, with reference to NATO standards, for the first time includes as part of the national defense budget retirement benefits for military veterans and expenditures for the Coast Guard Administration, Ocean Affairs Council. President Lai has set the goal of increasing the national defense budget to 5% of GDP by 2030.

According to the 2025 Report on "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China" released by the U.S. Department of War in December 2025, the PLA's capabilities to invade Taiwan have been assessed as follows:

- Regarding the PLA ground forces, six PLA Army (PLAA) amphibious combined arms brigades and four PLA Navy (PLAN) Marine Corps maneuver brigades deployed in the Eastern Theater and Southern Theater and PLA Air Force (PLAAF) Airborne Corps deployed in the Central Theater may participate in the invasion operation, and the PLA is conducting training in more realistic and large-scale places that simulate the operational environment in Taiwan.
- The PLAN is continuing to modernize with the objective of gaining maritime superiority in a conflict over Taiwan. It possesses a large number of operationally ready vessels, enabling sustained expansion of its patrol posture and rapid reinforcement of military forces during crises and wartime. On the other hand, China, despite almost certainly lacking the sea and air transport capabilities necessary for a large-scale amphibious attack on Taiwan, shows no signs of significantly increasing the number of tank landing ships or medium-sized landing craft it has, and appears to be attempting to make up for the shortage with civilian transport ships.
- The PLAAF possesses a large number of advanced aircraft capable of conducting operations against Taiwan without aerial refueling, and these aircraft have critical capabilities for conducting air and ground-attack operations. Furthermore, advanced aircraft like the J-16 fighter aircraft and J-20 fighter aircraft possess stand-off and other capabilities, which could present a difficult problem for the United States and its allies in a conflict. Moreover, aircraft such as the KJ-500 early warning and control aircraft have high intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capability to support military operations.
- The PLA Rocket Force (PLARF) is preparing to carry out missile attacks on high-value targets such as Taiwan's command and control facilities, air bases, and radar sites, and it intends to lower the defense capabilities of Taiwan to neutralize its leadership and break Taiwan's will to fight.

In addition to these assessments, it is pointed out in the report that the Information Support Force, the Cyberspace Force, and the Aerospace Force would conduct operations in the information warfare, cyber, electronic, and space domains, and the Joint Logistics Support Force would be responsible for integrated logistical support missions.

The military capabilities of China and Taiwan are generally characterized as follows:

(1) Regarding ground forces, while China possesses an overwhelming number of troops, its capability of landing and invading the island of Taiwan is limited at present. In recent years, however, China has been steadily improving

seaborne invasion capabilities through building and commissioning large landing ships, and it is also improving transportation capabilities by mobilizing civil transport ships and the like. Confronting this, in recent years, Taiwan also has been aiming to increase the costs of invasion for China, through enhanced training using asymmetric weapons including Javelin anti-tank missiles, expanded combat drills with reservists and would-be draftees from conscription, and the strengthening of whole-of-society resilience through military-civilian integration.

(2) In regard to China's naval and air forces, the PLAN and PLAAF are being rapidly reinforced both in terms of quality and quantity. This includes the commissioning of China's third aircraft carrier, which is seen as being equipped with an electromagnetic catapult system, and operational deployment of J-20 fifth-generation fighter aircraft. While Taiwan works on the procurement of unmanned aerial vehicles and unmanned vessels, including a large number of suicide types, and strives to enhance its sea and air forces, including the expansion of asymmetric forces, by passing special budgets for them, the difference in strength is expanding in an advantageous direction for China.

(3) China has strong offensive power of missiles including short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) and multiple launch rockets with enough range to attack Taiwan. In response, Taiwan has strengthened its missile defense capabilities by introducing PAC-3 missiles from the United States and increasing the number of Taiwan's own Tien Kung III missile sites. However, limitations to this response have been pointed out when it comes to dealing with a saturation attack. In addition, Taiwan is attempting to enhance its enemy territory attack capabilities, including by possessing long-range cruise missiles such as the Hsiung Sheng surface-to-surface missile, which are said to have a range of approximately 1,200 km, and deciding to introduce AGM-84H long-range air-to-surface missiles from the United States.

Comparison of military capabilities should be made based not only on the troop strength and the performance and quantity of equipment but also on various other factors such as the purpose and aspects of assumed military operations, operational arrangements, the skill level of personnel, and logistics. Nevertheless, the overall military balance between China and Taiwan is rapidly tilting to China's favor.

Concern over peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait which is vital for international security and prosperity is rapidly heightening not only in the Indo-Pacific region, but also among the whole international community, because China is activating threatening military actions around Taiwan.

Recognizing that China's attempts to make unilateral changes to the status quo by force or coercion are a challenge not only for the Indo-Pacific region but one common to the entire world, Japan, in cooperation with its ally, the United States, like-minded nations, and the international community, will closely monitor related developments with a greater sense of crisis.

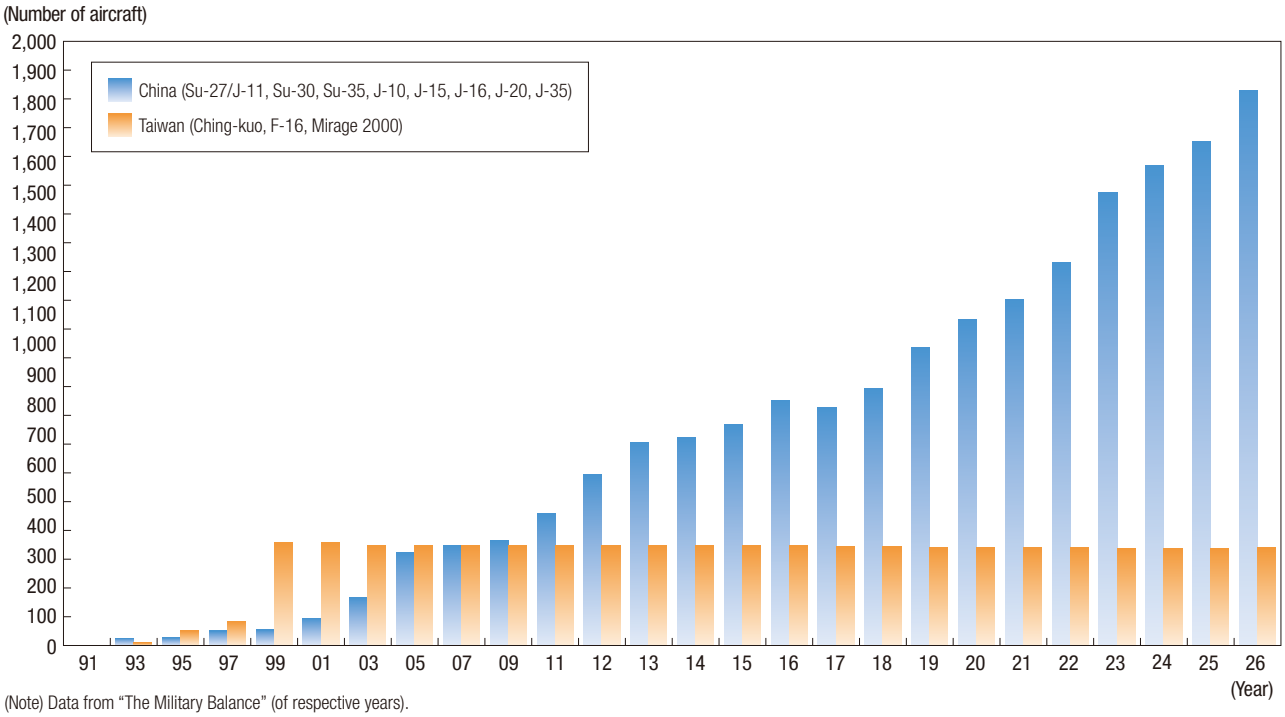
See Fig. I-3-3-1 (Placement of Taiwan Military), Fig. I-3-3-2 (Changes in the Taiwan's Defense Authority Budget), Fig. I-3-3-3 (Comparison of China and Taiwan Military Forces), Fig. I-3-3-4 (Changes in the Number of Modern Fighter Aircraft of China and Taiwan)

Fig. I-3-3-3 Comparison of China and Taiwan Military Forces

		China	Taiwan
Total military forces		Approx. 2.04 million personnel	Approx. 0.17 million personnel
Ground forces	Ground troops	Approx. 0.95 million personnel	Approx. 95,000 personnel
	Tanks, etc.	Type-99/A, Type-96/A, Type-88A/B and others Approx. 5,950 vehicles	M1A2T, M-60A3, CM-11 and others Approx. 830 vehicles
Maritime forces	Warships	Approx. 700 vessels Approx. 2,400,000 tons	Approx. 150 vessels Approx. 210,000 tons
	Aircraft carriers, destroyers, and frigates	Approx. 110 vessels	Approx. 25 vessels
	Submarines	Approx. 70 vessels	4 vessels
	Marines	Approx. 45,000 personnel	Approx. 10,000 personnel
Air forces	Combat aircraft	Approx. 3,340 aircraft	Approx. 410 aircraft
	Modern fighter aircraft	J-10 × 608 Su-27/J-11 × 327 Su-30 × 97 Su-35 × 24 J-15 × 116 J-16 × 350 J-20 × 308 J-35 × 8 (Fourth and fifth generation fighters (total): 1,838)	Mirage2000 x 53 F-16 (modified V) x141 Ching-kuo x 129 (Fourth generation fighter aircraft (total): 323)
Reference	Population	Approx. 1.415 billion	Approx. 24.0 million
	Term of service	2 years	1 year

(Note) Data from "The Military Balance 2026," etc.

Fig. I-3-3-4 Changes in the Number of Modern Fighter Aircraft of China and Taiwan



(Note) Data from "The Military Balance" (of respective years).

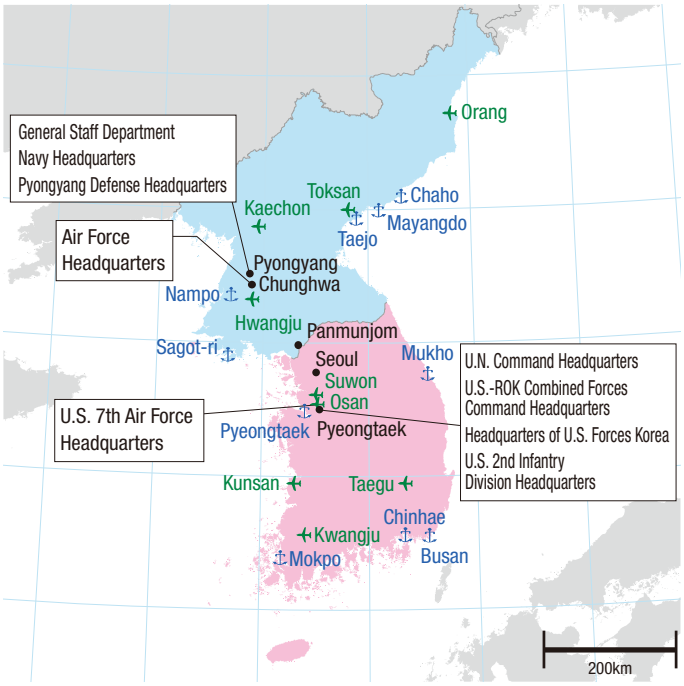
Section 4 Korean Peninsula

The Korean Peninsula has been split for more than half a century, with people of the same ethnicity divided between the north and south. Even today, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and North Korea pit their ground forces of about 1.5 million against each other across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

Peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula under such security environment is an extremely important challenge not only to Japan but also to the entire region of East Asia.

See Fig. I-3-4-1 (Military Confrontation on the Korean Peninsula)

Fig. I-3-4-1 Military Confrontation on the Korean Peninsula



		North Korea	ROK	U.S. Forces Korea
Total military forces		Approx. 1.28 million personnel	Approx. 450,000 personnel	Approx. 30,000 personnel
Ground forces	Ground troops	Approx. 1.1 million personnel	Approx. 320,000 personnel	Approx. 20,000 personnel
	Tanks	T-62, T-54, T-55, etc. Approx. 3,500	M-48, K-1, K-2, etc. Approx. 2,110	M1A2
Naval forces	Warships	Approx. 790 vessels Approx. 100,000 tons	Approx. 230 vessels Approx. 320,000 tons	Supporting corps only
	Destroyers Frigates Submarines	 6 21	13 17 21	
	Marines		Approx. 30,000 personnel	
Air forces	Combat aircraft	Approx. 550	Approx. 570	Approx. 70
	Third, fourth and fifth generation fighters	MiG-23 × 56 MiG-29 × 18	F-16 × 165 F-15 × 59 F-35 × 39	F-16 × 70
Reference	Population	Approx. 26 million	Approx. 51 million	
	Term of service	Men: 10 years Women: 7 years	Army: 18 months Navy: 20 months Air Force: 21 months	

(Note) Data from "The Military Balance 2026," etc.

1 North Korea

1 General Situation

Kim Jong-un, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of North Korea[1] (hereinafter referred to as "Chairman Kim") made it clear that he adhered to the so-called "Byungjin line" policy of simultaneous economic and nuclear development as well as "Songun politics"[2] in May 2016. In fact, North Korea pushed ahead and conducted three nuclear tests and launched numerous ballistic missiles from 2016 to 2017, and stated that it had completed development of the state nuclear force. This intensified sanctions based on resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and other independent sanctions by several countries including Japan and the United States.

On the other hand, in early 2018, Chairman Kim declared that the "Byungjin line" had been successfully carried out and announced the "new strategic line" in which it would "fully concentrate efforts on the construction of a socialist economy." Chairman Kim decided to discontinue "nuclear tests and intercontinental ballistic rocket test-fire" and announced the nuclear test ground had been blown up, while momentum toward dialogue between the United States or the ROK and North Korea grew. He also expressed during the U.S.-North Korea summit meeting in June 2018 the intention to work toward denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

However, the February 2019 U.S.-North Korea summit meeting ended without the two sides reaching an agreement. In December of the same year, Chairman Kim announced the intention to continue developing strategic weapons until the United States rolled back its hostile policy toward North Korea. Furthermore, Chairman Kim showed his hostile stance toward the United States in January 2021, and stated to "further strengthen the nuclear war deterrent" showing the intention to continue developing nuclear and missile capabilities.

After that, North Korea criticized the U.S. attitude toward it and continuously states its intention to strengthen military power including nuclear weapons, as a "self-defense" right. It resumed launching intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)-class ballistic missiles in 2022 and in addition it repeatedly launched ballistic missiles at an unprecedentedly high frequency. Furthermore, in September 2023, it added a provision to its constitution stating that it would "develop nuclear weapons to a higher level."

North Korea will continue to make greater efforts to maintain and enhance military capabilities and combat readiness, including its nuclear and missile capabilities.

While the defense expenditure of North Korea was said to make up 15.8% of its annual budget according to North Korea's announcement regarding the Supreme People's Assembly in March 2026, this seems to be only a part of the actual defense expenditure, and North Korea continues to heavily allocate its resources to military affairs.

Such military trends in North Korea pose even graver and more imminent threats than past times to Japan's security and significantly undermine the peace and security of the region and the international community. Additionally, such development poses a serious challenge to the entire international community with regard to the non-proliferation of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

Needless to say, North Korea's development and possession of nuclear weapons cannot be tolerated. At the same time, sufficient attention needs to be paid to the development and deployment of its ballistic missiles and the like, military confrontation on the Korean Peninsula and proliferation of WMDs and missiles by North Korea. As for the abductions issue, utmost efforts continue to be made to realize the return of all abductees to Japan as quickly as possible by close cooperation with related countries, including the United States.

2 Military Posture

(1) General Situation

North Korea has continued to consistently build up its military forces given the situation of south-north division,[3] but there is a significant qualitative disparity between its conventional forces and those of the ROK's military and U.S. Forces Korea. In this context, North Korea has intensively built up its nuclear and missile capabilities. On the other hand, moves by North Korea to build up its conventional forces have been seen recently, such as the broad development and upgrading of conventional weapons including tanks and naval vessels, and in the 9th Congress of the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) held in February 2026, the updating of the conventional forces was presented as one of the policies for building up the

1 As of May 2016, Kim Jong-un held the position of the First Chairman of the National Defense Commission. At the Supreme People's Assembly in June 2016, the National Defense Commission was renamed the State Affairs Commission, and Kim Jong-un assumed the position of Chairman of the State Affairs Commission. Reflecting this change, "Chairman of the State Affairs Commission" is used for the title of Kim Jong-un throughout this white paper.

2 In a written decision of the 7th Congress of the KWP, "Report on the Work of the KWP Central Committee" (May 8, 2016), it has been defined as a basic form of socialist politics that leads the great undertaking of socialism to victory by giving priority to the military forces in all activities under the principle of military first, and strengthening and relying on the actors in the revolution with the Korean People's Army (KPA) acting as the central and main force.

3 North Korea has been building up its military capabilities in accordance with the Four Military Guidelines, consisting of extensive training for all soldiers, modernizing all military forces, arming the entire population, and fortifying the entire country, adopted at the 5th plenary meeting of the 4th KWP Central Committee in 1962.

military forces.[4]

North Korea's military forces are comprised mainly of ground forces, with a total troop strength reaching roughly 1.28 million personnel. It still maintains a large-scale military force, including artillery units deployed near the DMZ. North Korea also retains special operations forces and the like on a large scale for information gathering and sabotage. In addition, many military underground facilities seem to exist all over the land, which is a peculiarity of North Korea.

Furthermore, North Korea is intensively building up its WMD and ballistic missiles. North Korea has repeatedly launched short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) and other missiles capable of flying at low altitudes with irregular trajectories in a simultaneous process of promoting the development of ICBM-class ballistic missiles covering a range of the whole U.S. territory and rapidly improving related technologies and operational capabilities. North Korea has been diversifying its launch platforms to include rail-launched and submarine-launched types. At the same time, it has been striving to expand more practical SRBM capabilities.

The background for North Korea's series of development and launches appears to be that in addition to acquiring nuclear deterrent capabilities through the possession of nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles for the maintenance and survival of the regime, North Korea aims to acquire the means to be able to respond in an armed conflict that could occur between itself and the United States as well as ROK forces in which conventional forces or tactical nuclear weapons are used.[5] To date North Korea has repeatedly stated it would enhance its military power, including nuclear weapons and missiles, according to the "five-year plan for the development of the defense science and the weapon system" (hereinafter "8th Party Congress Five-Year Plan"), which was apparently presented at the 8th Congress of the KWP in January 2021.[6] At the 9th Congress of the KWP in February 2026, Chairman Kim presented a new policy for the next five years, and it is thought that North Korea will focus efforts on research and development and enhancement of operational capabilities for various weapons based on this policy going forward.

(2) Military Capabilities

The North Korean Army comprises about 1.10 million personnel, and roughly two-thirds of them seem to be deployed along the DMZ. The main body of the army is infantry, but the army also maintains armored forces including at least 3,500 tanks and artillery. North Korea is believed to have deployed long-range artillery along the DMZ, such as 240 mm multiple rocket launchers and 170 mm self-propelled artillery guns, which can reach cities and bases in the northern part of the ROK including Seoul.

The Navy retains about 790 ships and boats with a total displacement of approximately 100,000 tons and is chiefly comprised of small naval vessels. Meanwhile, in April and June 2025, North Korea launched a "new-type multi-mission destroyer,"[7] which significantly exceeds the size of any warship previously possessed by North Korea. Chairman Kim stated that "we will execute this plan of building multi-mission destroyer year by year."[8] Also, it has about 20 of the former model Romeo-class submarines, about 30 midget submarines and about 140 air cushioned landing crafts, the latter two of which are believed to be used for infiltration and other actions of the special operations forces. In September 2023, the Navy launched a new submarine that appears to be a modified Romeo-class submarine and dubbed it a "tactical nuclear attack submarine."

The Air Force has approximately 550 combat aircraft, most of which are out-of-date models made in China or the former Soviet Union. However, some fourth-generation aircraft such as MiG-29 fighters and Su-25 attack aircraft are also included. North Korea has a large number of outdated An-2 transport aircraft as well, which are believed to be used for transportation of special operations forces.

4 When providing guidance to the projects of the Armored Defensive Weapons Institute and Electronic Weapons Institute in the Academy of Defense Sciences in September 2025, Chairman Kim mentioned that the "9th Congress of the KWP would put forward the policy of simultaneously pushing forward the building of nuclear forces and conventional armed forces in the field of building up national defense."

5 For example, at the 8th Congress of the KWP in January 2021, Chairman Kim stated that North Korea would "develop tactical nuclear weapons which can be used for various missions according to the purpose of operational duty and target of strike in a modern war" and "thoroughly contain, control and handle various military threats on the Korean peninsula which inevitably accompany the nuclear threat on our own initiative." He also stated in September 2022 that North Korea "will be enhancing tactical nuclear operation measures relentlessly, realize higher level of diversity of applying means, and strengthen nuclear combat posture from multiple directions."

6 There was no direct reference to the name "five-year plan for defense scientific development and weapons system development" in North Korea's announcement at the same Congress of the KWP in January 2021. However, when there was an announcement of the launch of a long-range cruise missile on September 13 of the same year, the North Korean media mentioned it publicly for the first time by stating that this missile development project was significant for "achieving the key objectives of the five-year plan for the development of defense science and weapon system presented at the 8th Congress of the KWP."

7 North Korea announced that this "new-type multi-mission destroyer" has been registered and classified as Choe Hyon-Class. Vessels of this class were launched at Nampo Shipyard in April 2025 and at Rajin Shipyard in June of the same year, and the vessels were called the Choe Hyon and the Kang Kon, respectively. Chairman Kim claimed that they are "equipped not only with anti-air, anti-ship, anti-submarine, and anti-ballistic missile capabilities, but also with weapon systems for the most effective ground striking operations, like supersonic strategic cruise missiles, tactical ballistic missiles and other means of strike." North Korea announced that, a few days after the launch ceremony at Nampo Shipyard, it conducted test launches of "supersonic cruise missiles" and "strategic cruise missiles" from the vessel.

8 After the launches of the Choe Hyon and the Kang Kon, North Korea announced in July 2025 that it would build its third Choe Hyon-class destroyer by October 2026.

North Korea also possesses a large special forces[9] contingent as a so-called asymmetric capability. In recent years, it has been strengthening its cyber units as an asymmetric force. These units are believed to steal cryptocurrency to fund nuclear and missile development, while also engaging in the theft of military secrets from other countries and developing capabilities to attack critical infrastructure abroad.

3 WMD and Missiles

(1) Nuclear Weapons

a. The Current Status of the Nuclear Weapons Program

North Korea possesses nuclear facilities such as nuclear reactors, including a 5MWe graphite-moderated reactor and an experimental light water reactor[10] as well as a reprocessing plant and uranium enrichment facilities in Yongbyon. It has been noted that the 5MWe graphite-moderated reactor would be able to produce about 6 kg of plutonium per year (enough to produce one to 1.5 nuclear warheads).[11] It has also been pointed out that the experimental light water reactor has been undergoing test operations since October 2023, and that a period of stable operation has subsequently been observed.[12]

With regard to plutonium, a fissile material that can be used for nuclear weapons,[13] North Korea has suggested several times that it has produced and extracted plutonium.[14] Because the restarting or startup of the reactors could lead to the production and extraction of plutonium by North Korea, those activities are causes of great concern.

As for highly enriched uranium that can also be used for nuclear weapons, in June 2009, North Korea declared the commencement of uranium enrichment. In November 2010, North Korea disclosed its uranium enrichment facility at Yongbyon to American nuclear specialists and later



Image released upon the announcement of Chairman Kim Jong-un's on-site guidance at "nuclear material production base" (January 2025)
[Korea News Service-Jiji]

announced that it was operating a uranium enrichment plant equipped with thousands of centrifuges. The expansion of this uranium enrichment plant has been suggested in recent years; in this regard, North Korea could have increased its enrichment capabilities. In addition, in September 2024 and January 2025, it was reported that Chairman Kim visited "nuclear material production Bases," both of which were revealed to be uranium enrichment facilities.[15] Chairman Kim has apparently suggested that North Korea plans to further increase its production of enriched uranium to develop nuclear weapons by increasing the number of centrifuges, improving the capacity, and introducing new types of centrifuges as well as underlining the need to "achieve epochal successes in overfulfilling the plan for producing weapons-grade nuclear materials and in strengthening the nuclear shield of the country." It appears that North Korea is advancing nuclear weapons development using highly enriched uranium in addition to plutonium.

In general, facilities used for uranium enrichment are more secretive in appearance than reactors used for plutonium

9 James Thurman, then Commander of the U.S. Forces Korea, stated, "North Korea possesses the world's largest special operations force of over 60,000" in his speech at the Association of U.S. Army in October 2012. Additionally, the 2022 Defense White Paper of the ROK stated that "an estimated 200,000 personeel are assigned" to special operations units of North Korea.

10 Nuclear reactors are classified into graphite-moderated reactors, heavy water reactors, and light water reactors, depending on the moderator used. Graphite-moderated reactors and heavy water reactors use natural uranium as their fuel, while light-water reactors use low-enriched uranium as fuel, with the concentration of uranium-235 increased to 3–5%.

11 It has been pointed out that the 5 MWe graphite-moderated reactor is highly likely to have remained in operation. Furthermore, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi has pointed out that the reactor was shut down from mid-August to mid-October 2024, that this period was long enough to replace the reactor's fuel, and that signs consistent with the reprocessing of the reactor's spent fuel have been confirmed.

12 IAEA Director General Grossi has pointed out that although the experimental light water reactor was shut down from August to November 2025, there are signs that it has subsequently remained in operation.

13 Plutonium is generated in a nuclear reactor through neutron irradiation of uranium and is subsequently extracted from spent nuclear fuel at a reprocessing facility. Meanwhile, in order to use uranium for nuclear weapons, it is necessary to extract uranium 235 (U235), a highly fissile material, from natural uranium. This process is called enrichment. Generally, a large-scale enrichment facility that combines thousands of centrifuges is used to boost the U235 concentration to nuclear weapon levels (over 90%).

14 North Korea announced in October 2003 that it had completed the reprocessing of 8,000 used fuel rods that contain plutonium from a 5MWe graphite-moderated reactor, and in May 2005 that it had completed extraction of an additional 8,000 used fuel rods. The 2022 Defense White Paper of the ROK estimates that North Korea possesses around 70 kg of plutonium.

15 It has been noted that the facility disclosed in September 2024 is the uranium enrichment facility in Kangson, while the facility disclosed in January 2025 is the uranium enrichment facility in Yongbyon. In addition to these disclosed facilities, in June of the same year, IAEA Director General Grossi pointed out that a new facility similar in scale and characteristics to the Kangson enrichment facility had been built in Yongbyon.

production, and it is difficult to ascertain their activities from the outside. On the other hand, plutonium has a smaller critical mass than uranium, and it is pointed out that it is easier to make nuclear weapons smaller and lighter. In light of both these advantages, North Korea may continue to promote the development of both plutonium and uranium types of nuclear weapons.

It is highly likely that North Korea has made strides in its nuclear weapons program, while miniaturizing nuclear weapons to be loaded on ballistic missiles, through its previous six nuclear tests.[16] In September 2017, it was announced that Chairman Kim had visited Nuclear Weapons Institute and had seen a hydrogen bomb capable of being loaded into an ICBM. In addition, following North Korea's sixth nuclear test that was forced through on the same day, North Korea announced that it "successfully carried out a test of H-bomb for ICBM."[17]

In regard to miniaturization of nuclear weapons small enough to be mounted on a ballistic missile, it is assessed that North Korea has already miniaturized its nuclear warheads to mount and therefore possesses the capacity to attack Japan, for at least its ballistic missiles with their range covering the Japanese Archipelago, such as the Nodong and Scud [ER] (Extended Range). This assessment is based on the fact that the United States, the former Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France, and China succeeded in acquiring such technology by as early as the 1960s and that North Korea is estimated to have matured technically through its previous six nuclear tests. There have also been reports that North Korea possesses approximately 50 nuclear warheads—enough fissile material overall to produce up to 90 nuclear warheads.[18]

Moreover, it is likely that North Korea has been preparing for further nuclear tests, as it was reported that since March 2022, North Korea has been working on restoring its northern nuclear test site which was blown up publicly in 2018. It is also likely that North Korea will conduct nuclear tests further in the near future to implement ICBM-class ballistic missiles with multiple warhead and tactical nuclear weapons pursuing much smaller nuclear weapons.[19]

b. The Background to the Nuclear Weapons Program

North Korea's ultimate goal appears to be maintaining its existing regime. It has been developing nuclear weapons to achieve this goal through constructing its own nuclear deterrence to counter U.S. threats, including threats with nuclear weapons. These perceptions are obvious as can be seen in Chairman Kim's speech that North Korea can never abandon its nuclear weapons because the objective of the United States is to overthrow "our government."[20] It is likely that North Korea will continue to focus on acquiring deterrence against the United States, by advancing the development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles capable of attacking the whole U.S. territory.

On the other hand, North Korea has declared that the ROK is an "enemy country" and has repeatedly stated that the ROK will not be excluded from the potential targets of nuclear attacks. Furthermore, North Korea has shown its stance to pursue development of nuclear weapons not only as deterrence against the United States but also as tactical weapons to cope with possible armed conflict on the Korean Peninsula.

In September 2022, at the Supreme People's Assembly, North Korea passed a law on a policy of the nuclear forces laying down the mission, command and control, and terms of use for nuclear weapons, stating its "basic mission is deterrence against war" and when failing to deter a war, to "repel enemies' aggression and attacks, and accomplish decisive victory of the war." Chairman Kim justified his nuclear development, saying that by promulgating this law, "our status as a nuclear power irreversible." Furthermore, it is stipulated in the law that nuclear weapons can be used when an attack deemed imminent, regardless if it is a nuclear or conventional, on "leadership" or "important strategic objects" and, in particular, that a "nuclear strike" will be conducted automatically and immediately in the case that "command and control system over the state nuclear forces" are exposed to any danger. From these factors, it is possible that

16 To date, North Korea has conducted nuclear tests on October 9, 2006, May 25, 2009, February 12, 2013, January 6, 2016, September 9, 2016, and September 3, 2017.

17 The yield of the sixth nuclear test in 2017 was estimated to be the largest ever, with a maximum yield of approximately 160 kt. Given the size of the estimated yield, the possibility cannot be discounted that the test was of a hydrogen bomb. North Korea also insisted that its fourth nuclear test, conducted in January 2016, was a hydrogen bomb test. However, given that the yield of that test is estimated at 6 to 7 kts, it is difficult to conceive that this was a hydrogen bomb test as generally defined.

18 According to SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) Yearbook 2025.

19 Chairman Kim mentioned "progressing research and development project to complete multiple independently-targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV) technology" and further miniaturization and weight reduction of nuclear weapons, as well as their tactical weaponization at the 8th Congress of the KWP in January 2021. In addition, when it launched an IRBM-class ballistic missile in June 2024, North Korea announced that it had conducted a "separation and guidance control test" of MIRV and asserted that each separated warhead was guided correctly to its target.

20 Chairman Kim stated in his speech at the Supreme People's Assembly held in September 2022 that "what the United States tries to achieve is not merely to remove our nuclear weapons; its final objective is to overthrow our government by inducing us to give up our capability of exercising the right to self-defense or by making the capability inferior to its own" and "we can never give up the nuclear weapons however harsh the circumstances are." Furthermore, at the Supreme People's Assembly held in September 2023, Chairman Kim stated in his speech that Article 58 of Chapter 4 of the Socialist Constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has new contents "to ensure the country's right to existence and development, deter war and protect regional and global peace by rapidly developing nuclear weapons to a higher level," and that "the Republic's nuclear force-building policy has been made permanent as the basic law of the state, which no one is allowed to flout with anything."

North Korea assumes use of nuclear weapons in an actual combat.[21]

Furthermore, at the 9th Congress of the KWP in February 2026, Chairman Kim mentioned that North Korea would "enhance the practical application of its nuclear combat forces" through various exercises to become proficient in the operation of nuclear weapons, indicating a policy of developing combat readiness for nuclear weapons. To date North Korea has repeatedly carried out missile launches which it called, for example, "tactical nuclear weapons operation units" training and "comprehensive tactical training for simulated nuclear counterstrike." Going forward, there is a possibility that it will continue to conduct training with the use of nuclear weapons in an actual war in mind, in accordance with the policy presented at the Congress.

(2) Biological and Chemical Weapons

North Korea is an extremely closed regime. In addition, most materials and technology used for manufacturing biological and chemical weapons are for both military and civilian uses, which in turn facilitates camouflage. For these reasons, details of the status of North Korea's biological and chemical weapons development and arsenals are unclear. However, with regard to chemical weapons, North Korea is suspected to have several facilities capable of producing chemical agents and already has a substantial stockpile of such agents. North Korea is also thought to have some infrastructure for the production of biological weapons.[22] Possession of sarin, VX, mustard and other chemical weapons, and of anthrax, smallpox, pest and other biological agents that could be used as biological weapons have been pointed out.

The possibility cannot be denied that North Korea is able to load biological and/or chemical weapons on warheads.

(3) Missile Forces

The missiles deemed to be possessed and developed by North Korea are the following.

See Fig. I-3-4-2 (Ballistic Missiles and Others Developed/Possessed by North Korea), Fig. I-3-4-3 (Range of North Korea's Ballistic Missiles), Fig. I-3-4-4 (Major Trends in North Korea's Ballistic Missile and Other Launches), Fig. I-3-4-5 (Cases of North Korean Ballistic Missiles Overflying Japan)

a. Types of Ballistic Missiles and Others Possessed or Developed by North Korea[23]

(a) Short-Range Ballistic Missile (SRBM) A-E (including Rail-Launched Types)

Since 2019, North Korea has launched various kinds of short-range ballistic missiles that differ from Scud missiles and other traditional liquid fuel-propelled missiles. Based on published images, it can be ascertained that these SRBMs were launched from wheeled-drive or tracked Transporter-Erector-Launchers[24] (TEL) or railway cars, and had the characteristics of solid fuel propelled engines.

(i) SRBM A (referred to as a "new type of tactical guided weapon" and "Hwasongpho-11-Ka" by North Korea)

SRBM A has a maximum flight range of approximately 800 km, based on launch records to date. It has a similarity to the Russian short-range ballistic missile "Iskander." It is also presumed that this missile is able to fly at a lower altitude than conventional ballistic missiles and on an irregular trajectory, and can carry nuclear warheads.[25]

Furthermore, North Korea is also launching rail-launched short-range ballistic missiles.[26] Based on images released by North Korea, these missiles were launched from railway cars that appear to have been converted from ordinary freight cars. They have external similarities with SRBM A, and it is possible that they were developed based on that missile. North Korea has announced that it was a firing exercise by the "railway-borne missile regiment."

(ii) SRBM B (referred to as a "new weapon" or "tactical guided weapon" by North Korea)

SRBM B has a maximum flight distance of about 400 km, based on launch records to date, and is believed to be capable of flying at lower altitudes than conventional ballistic missiles, with an irregular trajectory.

21 In fact, North Korea has repeatedly launched missiles, allegedly for realistic training; for example, it launched missiles in "tactical nuclear operation units" training several times from late September to October 2022. It also claimed that it had exploded a test warhead simulating a nuclear warhead above a target in what was called "combined tactical drill simulating a nuclear counterattack" in March 2023, among others. North Korea also announced in March 2023 that Chairman Kim received a report from the relevant department on tactical nuclear weapons and "guided the work for mounting nuclear warheads on ballistic missiles," giving direction to expand the production of weapon-grade nuclear materials and nuclear weapons.

22 The 2022 Defense White Paper of the ROK pointed out that North Korea began the production of chemical weapons in 1980s and has stored around 2,500-5,000 tons of them. Furthermore, it is estimated that North Korea has capabilities to cultivate and produce various kind of biological weapons such as anthrax, smallpox, and the plague on its own. North Korea acceded to the Biological Weapons Convention in 1987 but has not acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

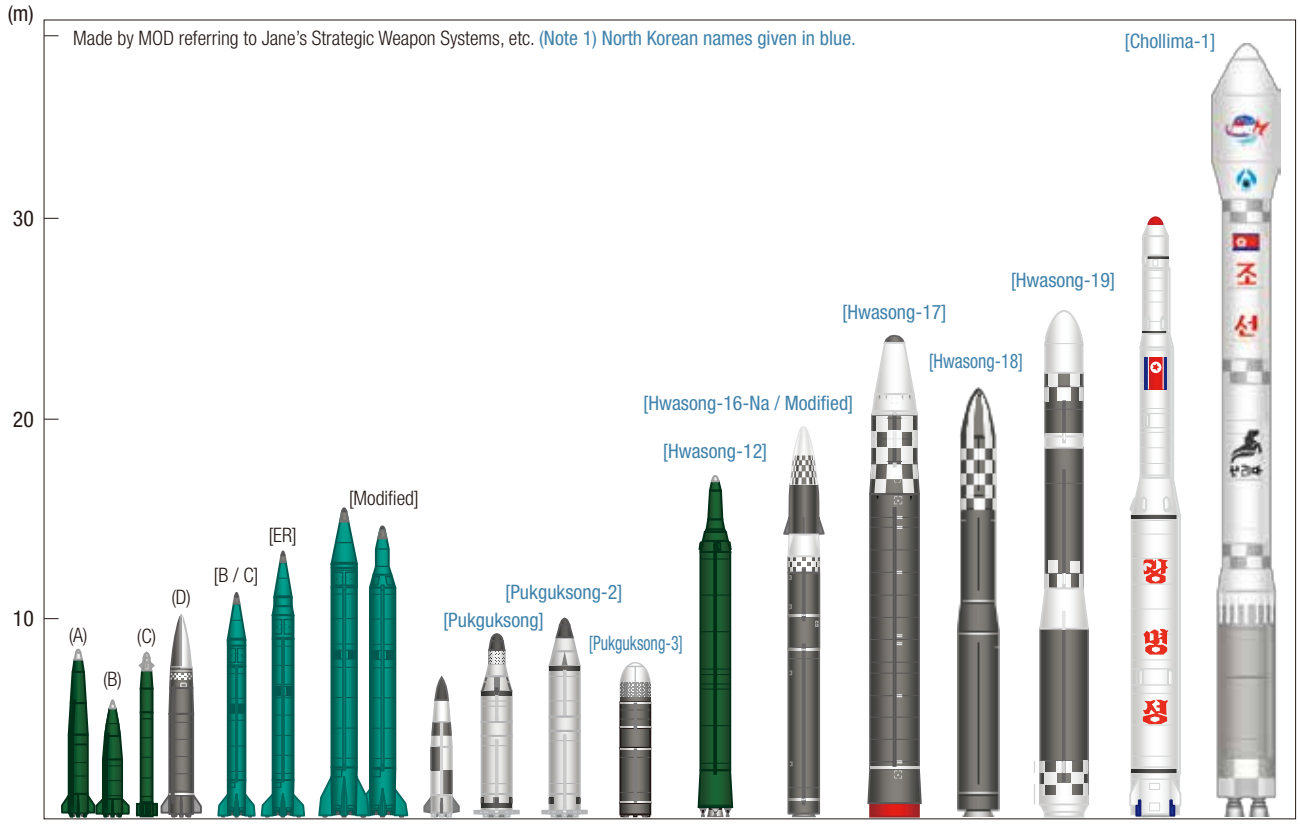
23 According to the Jane's Country Intelligence Report (accessed in March 2026), North Korea possesses 700 to 1,000 ballistic missiles in total, 45% of which are presumed to be Scud-class, 45% Nodong-class, and the remaining 10% other intermediate- and long-range ballistic missiles.

24 The signs of a launch from a fixed launcher are easy for the adversary to detect and are vulnerable to attack by the adversary. TEL was developed mainly by the former Soviet Union, among others, in order to make the detection of launch signs more difficult and increase survivability. According to the U.S. DIA's "North Korea Military Power" of October 2021, North Korea possesses a maximum of 100 TELs for Scud B and C, and 100 TELs for Nodongs. In the case of a TEL-mounted missile launch, it is considered difficult to detect specific indicators in advance regarding the exact location and timing of the launch. This is because missiles mounted on TELs can be transported and launched from various locations, and military-related underground facilities are believed to be distributed throughout North Korea.

25 According to the Congressional Research Service's "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons and Missile Programs" (January 2023) and others.

26 North Korea launched two (rail-launched) SRBMs on both September 15, 2021 and January 14, 2022.

Fig. I-3-4-2 Ballistic Missiles and Others Developed/Possessed by North Korea



	SRBM (A) / (B) / (C) / (D)	Scud B, C, ER	Nodong Modified	Small type SLBM	SLBM	Ground-launched type of Pukguksong series	SLBM	IRBM-class	IRBM-class	ICBM-class	ICBM-class	ICBM-class	Taepodong-2 variant	Chollima-1
Range	Approx. 800 km / Approx. 400 km / Approx. 400 km / Approx. 750km (Note 2)	Approx. 300 km / Approx. 500 km / Approx. 1,000km	Approx. 1,300 km / Approx. 1,500 km	Approx. 650km (Note 2)	1,000 km or more	1,000 km or more	Approx. 2,000km	Approx. 5,000km	Approx. 1,100km (Note 2)	15,000km or more (Note 3)	15,000km or more (Note 3)	15,000km or more (Note 3)	10,000km or more	–
Fuel/ stage	Solid / 1	Liquid / 1	Liquid / 1	Solid / 1	Solid / 2	Solid / 2	Solid / 2	Liquid / 1	Solid / 2	Liquid / 2	Solid / 3	Solid / 3	Liquid / 3	Liquid / 3
Operation platform	TEL	TEL	TEL	Submarines	Submarines	TEL	Submarines	TEL	TEL	TEL	TEL	TEL	Launch site	Launch site

(Notes) 2 Ranges of SRBM (A) / (B) / (C), small type SLBMs and "Hwasong-16-Na" are the largest ones achieved. SRBM (D) may have a range of 750 km.
3 Depends on weight of the warhead, etc.

(iii) Short-range ballistic missile C (referred to as "super-large multiple rocket launcher" and "600mm multiple rocket launcher" by North Korea)

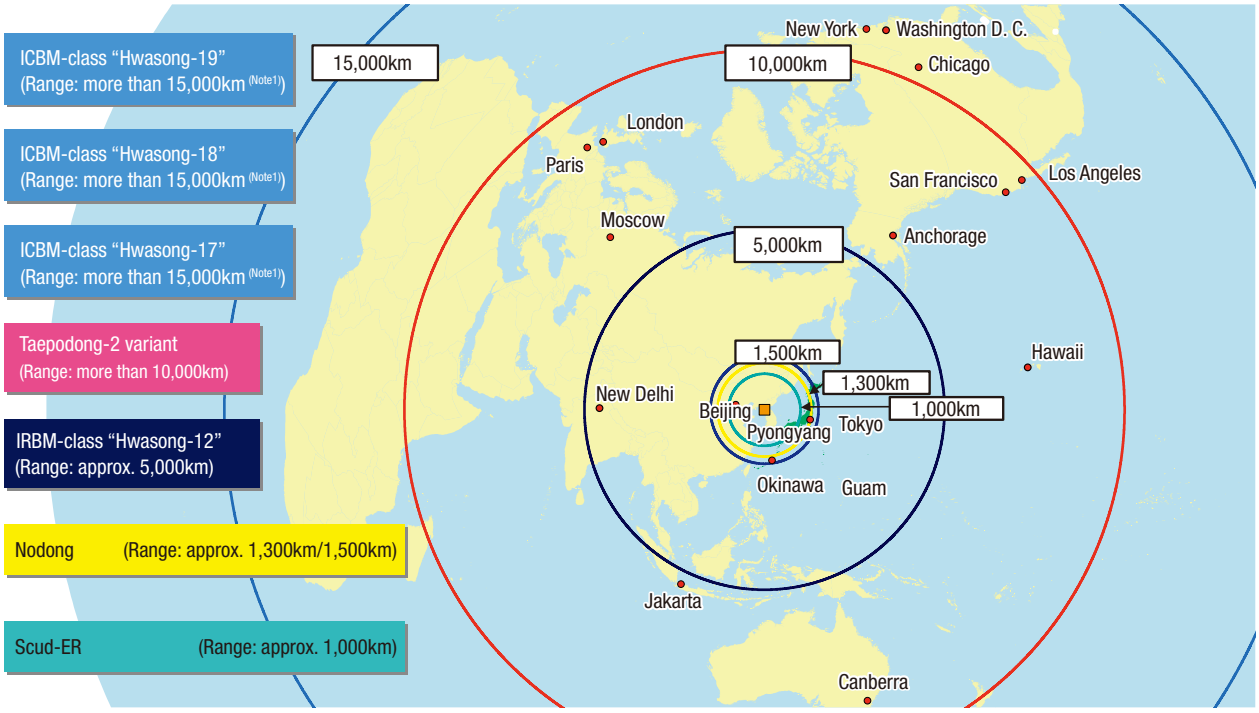
SRBM C has a maximum flight distance of approximately 400 km, based on launch records to date. Some of the intervals between launches were estimated less than 1 minute, suggesting that North Korea is trying to improve the continuous fire capability required for saturation attacks and the like. Chairman Kim mentioned that they can carry tactical nuclear warheads.[27]

(iv) SRBM D (referred to as a "new-type tactical guided missile" by North Korea)

SRBM D is a ballistic missile that is suggested to have been developed based on short-range ballistic missile A. It is capable of flying at lower altitudes than conventional ballistic missiles with an irregular trajectory and their maximum range could reach about 750 km.

27 Chairman Kim attended the ceremony to "donate" a super-large multiple rocket launcher to the 6th plenary meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the KWP in December 2022 and stated that this missile's range covered the whole ROK territory, and "is capable of carrying tactical nuclear warhead." He also said that the missile entered a mass production phase in January 2023.

Fig. I-3-4-3 Range of North Korea's Ballistic Missiles



(Notes) 1 Depends on weight of the warhead, etc.
2 For simplicity, the distance from Pyongyang is displayed in concentric circles as an image.
3 Quotation marks indicate the names used by North Korea.

See Fig. I-3-4-6 (List of SRBMs A-E Launch Dates (including rail-launched types))

(v) SRBM E (referred to as "Hwasongpho-11-Ra" by North Korea)

SRBM E is a short-range ballistic missile that was launched on April 19, 2026, and its launch from a wheeled-drive three-axis TEL can be confirmed from the images that North Korea released.

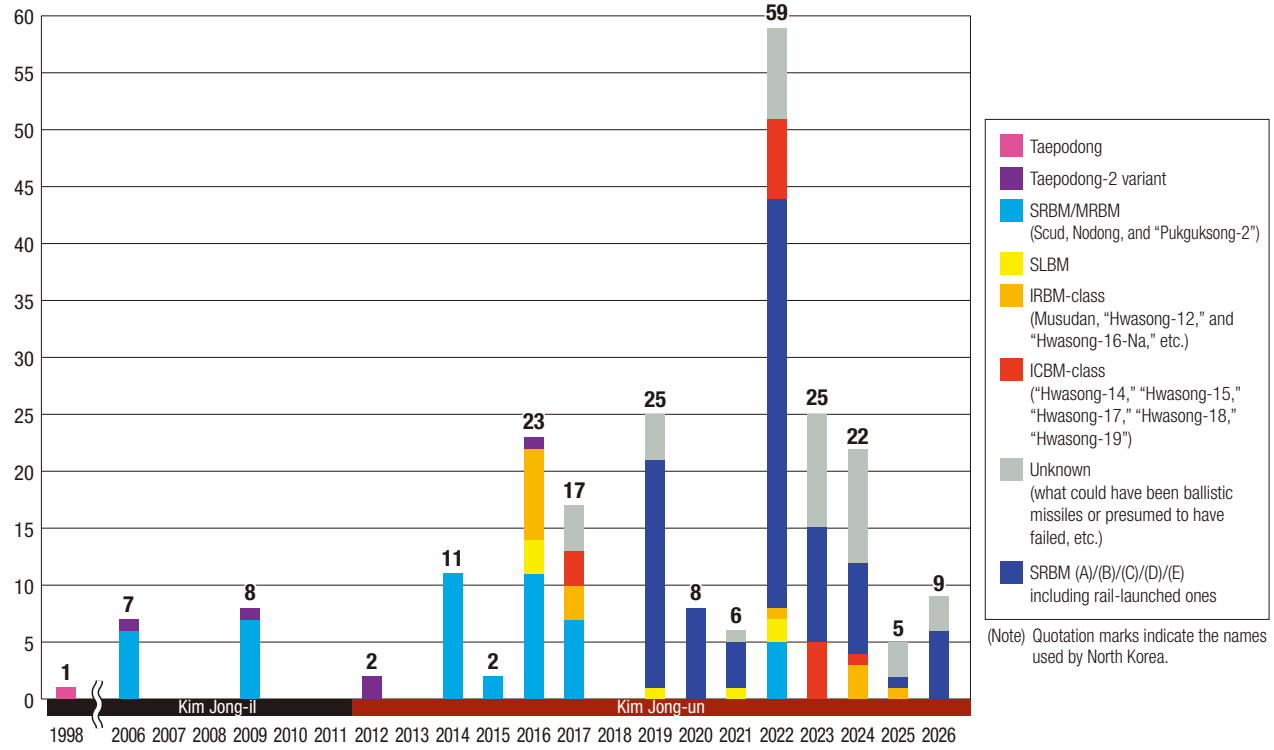
This ballistic missile is similar in appearance to the missile called a "new type of tactical guided weapon" that was announced by North Korea in April 2022.[28] Furthermore, it is small compared to SRBMs A, B, C, and D, so it is thought to be a shorter-range ballistic missile.[29]

28 This "new type of tactical guided weapon" is believed to be one of the weapons that North Korea is developing as potentially tactical nuclear weapons, in aiming to deal with armed conflicts that may occur with U.S. Forces and ROK Forces involving conventional forces and/or tactical nuclear weapons. This assessment is based on North Korea's announcements stating that this weapon is significant in drastically improving long-range artillery firepower and strike capabilities on each front and enhancing "effectiveness of tactical nuclear weapons operation."

29 Concerning the launch on April 19, 2026, the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff announced that the launched ballistic missile flew approximately 140 km.

Fig. I-3-4-4 Major Trends in North Korea's Ballistic Missile and Other Launches

Number of Ballistic Missiles and Other Missiles Launched by North Korea (as of May 31, 2026)



(Note) Quotation marks indicate the names used by North Korea.

[Enhancement of missile-related technologies]
1. Enhancement of launch secrecy and instantaneity
2. Enhancement of capabilities to breach Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD)
3. Development of long-range missiles

[Enhancement of missile operation capabilities]
North Korea conducted simultaneous launches of multiple missiles, launches at very short intervals, and launches from different locations to a specific target, etc.

Fig. I-3-4-5 Cases of North Korean Ballistic Missiles Overflying Japan

· Launches of ballistic missiles alleged to be launches of satellites after reporting supposed falling areas to international organizations (three times)

Date	Presumed type of missile	Number of launches	Location	Flight distance
April 5, 2009	Taepodong-2 or variant	1	Taepodong Area	3,000 km or more
December 12, 2012	Taepodong-2 variant	1	Tongch'ang-ri Area	Approx. 2,600 km (second stage landfall)
February 7, 2016	Taepodong-2 variant	1	Tongch'ang-ri Area	Approx. 2,500 km (second stage landfall)

· Launches of ballistic missiles without prior notice (four times)

Date	Presumed type of missile	Number of launches	Location	Flight distance
August 31, 1998	Taepodong-1	1	Taepodong Area	Approx. 1,600 km
August 29, 2017	IRBM-class "Hwasong-12"	1	Near Sunan	Approx. 2,700 km
September 15, 2017	IRBM-class "Hwasong-12"	1	Near Sunan	Approx. 3,700 km
October 4, 2022	Ballistic missiles over IRBMs in the range	1	Inland	Approx. 4,600 km

(Notes) 1 After the launch of Taepodong-1 on August 31, 1998, North Korea announced that it was the launch of a satellite.
2 Quotation marks indicate the names used by North Korea.

Fig. I-3-4-6 List of SRBMs A-E Launch Dates (including rail-launched types)

Launch dates	Type of missile
May 4, 2019	SRBM (A)
May 9, 2019	SRBM (A)
July 25, 2019	SRBM (A)
August 6, 2019	SRBM (A)
August 10, 2019	SRBM (B)
August 16, 2019	SRBM (B)
August 24, 2019	SRBM (C)
September 10, 2019	SRBM (C)
October 31, 2019	SRBM (C)
November 28, 2019	SRBM (C)
March 2, 2020	SRBM (C)
March 9, 2020	SRBM (C)
March 21, 2020	SRBM (B)
March 29, 2020	SRBM (C)
March 25, 2021	SRBM (D)
September 15, 2021	SRBM (rail-launched)
January 14, 2022	SRBM (rail-launched)
January 17, 2022	SRBM (B)
January 27, 2022	SRBM (A)
May 12, 2022	SRBM (C)
May 25, 2022	SRBM (possibly A or D
June 5, 2022	SRBM (including A, B and C)
September 28, 2022	SRBM (D)
September 29, 2022	SRBM (C)
October 1, 2022	SRBM (A)
October 6, 2022	SRBM (A, C)
October 9, 2022	SRBM (C)
October 14, 2022	SRBM (A)
November 3, 2022[30]	SRBM (C)
November 9, 2022	SRBM (possibly A or D)
November 17, 2022	SRBM (C)
December 31, 2022	SRBM (C)
January 1, 2023	SRBM (C)
February 20, 2023	SRBM (C)
March 19, 2023	SRBM (A)
March 27, 2023	SRBM (A)
August 30, 2023	SRBM (B)
September 13, 2023[31]	SRBM (A)
March 18, 2024	SRBM (C)
April 22, 2024	SRBM (C)
May 30, 2024	SRBM (C)
September 12, 2024	SRBM (C)
May 8, 2025[32]	SRBM (A)
January 27, 2026[33]	SRBM (C)
March 14, 2026	SRBM (C)
April 19, 2026	SRBM (E)

(b) Scud Missile

The Scud is a liquid fuel propellant single-stage ballistic missile and is operated on a TEL.

Scud B is an SRBM with a range of 300 km, and Scud C is an SRBM with a range of 500 km. It is believed that North Korea has manufactured and retained them, and has exported them to the Middle East and other countries.

The Scud-ER is a ballistic missile that has an extended range due to the extension of the Scud missile's body as well as the reduction in weight of the warhead, among other factors. The range of the Scud ER is estimated to reach approximately 1,000 km, and it appears that a part of Japan falls within this range.[34]

(c) Nodong

The Nodong is a liquid fuel propelled single-stage ballistic missile and is operated on a TEL. It is assessed to have a range of about 1,300 km, reaching almost all of Japan.

The improved version, which aims to enhance accuracy through modifications to the warhead section, is believed to have a range of approximately 1,500 km due to the weight reduction of the warhead.

(d) Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM)

North Korea is believed to possess one Gorae-class submarine (displacement of approximately 1,500 tons) that is capable of carrying and launching a single SLBM and to operate it mainly as a test vessel. Additionally, in September 2023, a submarine called a "tactical nuclear attack submarine" appeared, which is believed to be a modified version of an existing Romeo-class submarine. Chairman Kim has stated that he intends to convert all existing medium-sized submarines into submarines capable of carrying tactical nuclear weapons. In January 2021, Chairman Kim also mentioned the goal of possessing nuclear-powered submarines, and in December 2025, it was officially announced that he had provided on-site guidance to the building project for a "nuclear-powered strategic guided missile submarine." At that time, North Korea mentioned that this building project is "one of the five priority tasks for the development of national defense capabilities presented at the 8th Congress of the Party," so it is believed that North Korea

30 It is presumed that of the six ballistic missiles launched on November 3, 2022, the two which flew approximately 350 km were both SRBM C.

31 The two ballistic missiles launched on September 13, 2023, are estimated to have flown approximately 350 km before maneuvering and ascending again, flying a total distance of approximately 650 km.

32 It is presumed that of the multiple ballistic missiles launched on May 8, 2025, the one which flew approximately 800 km was SRBM A.

33 It is presumed that the two or more ballistic missiles launched on January 27, 2026 were SRBM Cs.

34 Furthermore, North Korea is also developing a ballistic missile that appears to be an improvement of the Scud missile. This ballistic missile was launched on May 29, 2017. Images released by North Korea indicate that the ballistic missile was launched from a tracked TEL and featured small fins on its warhead, i.e., suggesting characteristics distinct from those of existing Scud-class missiles. It has also been noted that this ballistic missile is equipped with a Maneuverable Re-entry Vehicle (MaRV).

will continue to focus on building such submarines.

North Korea has been developing SLBMs to be mounted on these submarines, and, in May 2015, it announced the first successful test launch of an SLBM.[35] North Korea is believed to be seeking to diversify its ballistic missile strike capabilities and improve its survivability.



Image released upon the announcement of Chairman Kim Jong-un's "nuclear-powered strategic guided missile submarine" on-site guidance
[Korea News Service-Jiji]

(i) SLBM "Pukguksong" (referred to as "Pukguksong"-type by North Korea)

This is a solid fuel-propelled SLBM launched from a Gorae-class submarine. Judging from the images and footage that it has made public, North Korea may have succeeded in operating the "cold launch system," in which the missile is ignited after it is ejected into the air. If launched with a normal trajectory, this missile is expected to have a range of over 1,000 km.

(ii) SLBM "Pukguksong-3" (referred to as "Pukguksong-3" by North Korea)

This solid fuel-propelled SLBM is different from the Pukguksong SLBM, and, if launched with a normal trajectory, it could have a range of about 2,000 km.

In addition, North Korea unveiled possible SLBMs marked as "Pukguksong-4" and "Pukguksong-5," the launches of which have not been confirmed to date, at its military parades in October 2020 and January 2021, respectively.[36]

(iii) Small Type of SLBM

This is an SLBM which is smaller than the Pukguksong series. It has a maximum flight distance of about 650 km, based on launch records to date and is believed to be capable of flying at lower altitudes than conventional ballistic missiles with an irregular trajectory.

It is possible that this small SLBM was developed based on the SRBM A, as it has external similarities with that missile.

(e) Ballistic Missile Modified from the SLBM (referred to as "Pukguksong-2" by North Korea)

This is a solid-fuel propelled ballistic missile and is a modified version of the SLBM "Pukguksong" for ground launch. If it were launched with a nominal trajectory, the firing range is assessed to surpass 1,000 km.

It can be confirmed from images released by North Korea that the missile is launched from a tracked TEL using a so-called "cold launch system."

See Fig. I-3-4-7 (List of Launch Dates and Platforms for SLBMs and "Pukguksong" Series Ground-launched Ballistic Missiles)

Fig. I-3-4-7 List of Launch Dates and Platforms for SLBMs and "Pukguksong" Series Ground-launched Ballistic Missiles

Date	Presumed type of missile	Launch platforms
April 23, 2016	"Pukguksong"	Gorae-class submarine
July 9, 2016	"Pukguksong"	Gorae-class submarine
August 24, 2016	"Pukguksong"	Gorae-class submarine
February 12, 2017	"Pukguksong-2"	TEL
May 21, 2017	"Pukguksong-2"	TEL
October 2, 2019	"Pukguksong-3"	* Estimated to have been launched from underwater launch test equipment
October 19, 2021	Small type of SLBM	Gorae-class submarine
May 7, 2022	Small type of SLBM	Gorae-class submarine
September 25, 2022	Small type of SLBM	* Estimated to have been launched from underwater launch test equipment

35 In addition to launches that the Ministry of Defense had assessed as SLBM launches by North Korea, North Korea announced on May 9, 2015, that it had successfully test-launched an SLBM. In addition, on January 8, 2016, it released a video that appeared to show an SLBM ejection test different from the one it had released in May 2015.

36 In addition, at the military parade on April 25, 2022, North Korea unveiled what appeared to be a previously undisclosed SLBM. but it was not named, and no details have been released.

37 Regarding the September 2022 launch, North Korea announced later that it had conducted a ballistic missile launch drill under the simulation of loading tactical nuclear warhead at a "silo under a reservoir" in the northwestern region and revealed the existence of a planned "silo beneath the reservoir."

(f) Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM)-Class

(i) "Hwasong-12" (according to North Korea's designation)
This is a liquid fuel-propelled IRBM-class ballistic missile launched since May 2017, and it appears to have a maximum range of approximately 5,000 km.

North Korea launched one of these in August and another one in September 2017, and each flew over Japan's territory in the vicinity of the Oshima Peninsula and Cape Erimo (both in Hokkaido).[38]

(ii) Solid fuel-propelled IRBMs
In January 2024, North Korea launched a solid fuel-propelled IRBM-class ballistic missile for the first time. It has since been confirmed that North Korea has multiple types of solid fuel-propelled IRBM-class ballistic missiles.

On January 14, 2024, North Korea launched a new type of IRBM-class ballistic missile. The day after the launch, North Korea announced that it had successfully test launched an "intermediate-range solid fuel ballistic missile" equipped with a "hypersonic maneuverable controlled warhead." Based on released images, it has been confirmed that this warhead was conical.

On April 2, 2024, a new type of IRBM-class ballistic missile was launched, which was different from the above-mentioned one launched on January 14. The day after the launch, North Korea announced that it had successfully test launched a "Hwasong-16-Na" (according to North Korea's designation) equipped with a "hypersonic glide vehicle." North Korea apparently views this "Hwasong-16-Na" missile as a "new-type intermediate-range solid-fueled ballistic missile," and, based on released images, it can be seen that the missile has a flat warhead and can be launched using a seven-axle TEL. In addition, on January 6, 2025, North Korea launched another IRBM-class ballistic missile with a flat warhead. Given that it was similar in appearance to the Hwasong-16-Na, it is assumed that the missile was either a Hwasong-16-Na or an improved version.[39]



Image released by North Korea when it launched a "Hwasong-16-Na" IRBM-class ballistic missile [Korea News Service-Jiji]

North Korea insists that these ballistic missiles were hypersonic missile, but the Ministry of Defense (MOD) is currently analyzing them, including whether they were in fact hypersonic weapons.

(g) Intercontinental-Range Ballistic Missile (ICBM)-Class

(i) "Hwasong-17" (according to North Korea's designation)
This is a liquid fuel-propelled two-stage ICBM-class ballistic missile that is operated on an 11-axle TEL. In February 2022, North Korea launched a Hwasong-17 missile for the first time.

The missile's range is estimated to be over 15,000 km depending on factors such as its warhead weight.

(ii) "Hwasong-18" (according to North Korea's designation)
This is a solid fuel-propelled three-stage ICBM-class ballistic missile, and North Korea launched the Hwasong-18 for the first time in April 2023. From the images released by North Korea, it can be observed that the missile is launched using a so-called "cold launch system" from a nine-axle TEL equipped with a canister (launch tube).

The missile's range is estimated to be over 15,000 km depending on factors such as its warhead weight.

(iii) "Hwasong-19" (according to North Korea's designation)
This is a new type of solid fuel-propelled three-stage ICBM-class ballistic missile, and North Korea launched the Hwasong-19 for the first time in October 2024. This ballistic missile is estimated to have flown for approximately 86 minutes at an altitude of over 7,000 km, making it North Korea's longest and highest flying missile ever. From the images released by North Korea, it can be observed that the missile is launched using a so-called "cold launch system" from an 11-axle TEL.

The day after the launch, North Korea stated that the "Hwasong-19" is an "ICBM of ultimate version" and added that it will be used along with "Hwasong-18."

The missile's range is estimated to be over 15,000 km depending on factors such as its warhead weight. In addition, it has been suggested that, given that the Hwasong-19 is larger than the Hwasong-18, it is possible that North Korea plans to outfit the missile with MIRV.

38 North Korea also launched a missile passing over Aomori Prefecture, Japan, on October 4, 2022. It is presumed that this missile was a ballistic missile with a range over that of an IRBM, based on the flight distance of around 4,600 km achieved at that time. North Korea announced later that a "new type of surface-to-surface intermediate-range ballistic missile" was launched. From images released at the time, although the date of photography was not mentioned, the characteristics of a liquid fuel-propelled engine and TELs similar to those for "Hwasong-12" missiles were visually confirmed. On the other hand, since the shape of the warhead and engine structure differed from "Hwasong-12" missiles, the possibility that the missile North Korea launched at that time was a new type of IRBM-class ballistic missiles cannot be ruled out.

39 The day after the launch, North Korea announced that it had launched a "new-type intermediate-range hypersonic ballistic missile." North Korea also announced that a "new compound carbon fiber material" was used in the engine body of the missile and that a "new comprehensive and effective method" had been introduced in the flight and guidance control system.

(h) Taepodong-2

Taepodong-2 is a long-range ballistic missile launched from a fixed launch pad.[40] Its range is estimated to be approximately 6,000 km for the two-stage type, while the range of its three-stage variant can be more than approximately 10,000 km assuming that the weight of the warhead is not over approximately 1 ton. Taepodong-2 missiles and its variants were launched a total of five times by February 2016.

(i) Chollima-1 (according to North Korea's designation)

"Chollima-1" is what North Korea claims to be a "new satellite-carrying rocket" intended to launch a "military reconnaissance satellite." "Chollima-1" is launched from a fixed launch pad and is three-stage configuration.

North Korea used "Chollima-1" to conduct a total of three launches using ballistic missile technology for the purpose of a satellite launch in May, August, and November 2023, with the first two launches believed to have failed. As for the November launch, it was confirmed that the object launched at that time was orbiting Earth.[41]

(j) Ballistic Missiles Referred to as "Hypersonic Missiles"

At the 8th Congress of the KWP in January 2021, North Korea expressed its intention to develop and introduce "hypersonic gliding flight warheads." Since then, it has been repeatedly launching multiple types of missiles it calls "hypersonic missiles."

Based on the trends to date, it seems clear that North Korea is attempting to breach missile defense networks by continuing to develop hypersonic weapons and other armaments while also improving its related capabilities. In addition, the confirmed existence of both conical and flat warheads implies that North Korea is developing hypersonic weapons with different ranges and modes of flight through the parallel development of different types of warheads in an attempt to make it more complicated for other countries to deal with them, so North Korea's technological progress must be closely monitored.

See Fig. I-3-4-8 (Instances in Which North Korea Launched What It Referred to as "Hypersonic Missiles")

Fig. I-3-4-8 Instances in Which North Korea Launched What It Referred to as "Hypersonic Missiles"[42]

Date	North Korea's designation	Characteristics, etc.
September 28, 2021	Hypersonic missile type "Hwasong-8"	- Flat-shaped warhead - Liquid-fuel propulsion system
January 5, 2022	Hypersonic missile	- Conical-shaped warhead - Liquid-fuel propulsion system
January 11, 2022	Hypersonic missile	- Conical-shaped warhead - Liquid-fuel propulsion system - It is possible that it flew on a non-standard trajectory, including horizontal maneuvers, at a maximum speed of about Mach 10.
January 14, 2024	Hypersonic missile	- Conical-shaped warhead - Solid-fuel propulsion system
April 2, 2024	New type of medium- to long-range hypersonic missile "Hwasong-16-Na"	- Flat-shaped warhead - Solid-fuel propulsion system
January 6, 2025	New type of hypersonic medium- to long-range ballistic missile	- Flat-shaped warhead - Solid-fuel propulsion system - Estimated to be the "Hwasong-16-Na" type or its improved version
October 22, 2025	Hypersonic flight vehicle	- Solid-fuel propulsion system
January 4, 2026[43]	Hypersonic missile	- Solid-fuel propulsion system

40 Taepodong-2 is believed to use four Nodong-derived engines in its first stage and a single engine of the same type in its second stage.

41 The launched object separated into several parts. The first is assessed to have fallen into the Yellow Sea approximately 150 km west of the Korean Peninsula, the second into the East China Sea approximately 350 km west of the Peninsula, and the third passed over the airspace between Okinawa Island and Miyakojima Island before reaching the Pacific Ocean approximately 1,000 km west of Okinotorishima, outside Japan's EEZ. All of these are estimated to have fallen outside the designated drop zones.

42 In addition, it is likely that the ballistic missile launched on December 23, 2022, was the same as the ballistic missiles launched on January 5 and January 11, 2022, which North Korea referred to as hypersonic missiles. In addition, a missile with an appearance similar to the Hwasong-8 was unveiled at an exhibition titled "Weaponry Exhibition-2023" in July 2023 and a military parade in the same month, but the missile also has different characteristics from the Hwasong-8, and details have not been revealed.

43 The two ballistic missiles launched on January 4, 2026 flew approximately 900 km and approximately 950 km, respectively.

b. Cruise Missiles Developed by North Korea

North Korea has been stating its intention to develop cruise missiles which are supposed to carry nuclear weapons. For example, in January 2021, Chairman Kim mentioned the development of "ultra-modern tactical nuclear weapons including intermediate-range cruise missiles."

In fact, North Korea announced that it conducted a test launch of a newly developed long-range cruise missile in September 2021. In addition, it revealed a long-range cruise missile launch in January 2022, which is believed to be of another type. It has become clear that these cruise missiles are designated the "Strategic Cruise Missile Hwasal-1" and the "Strategic Cruise Missile Hwasal-2," respectively. According to a statement by North Korea, these cruise missiles flew up to 2,000 km.[44]

It was also announced that "strategic cruise missiles" were launched from submarines in March 2023 and from a patrol ship in August of the same year. In addition, in April 2025, North Korea announced that it conducted test launches of "supersonic cruise missiles" and "strategic cruise missiles" from a "new-type multi-mission destroyer."

It is obvious that North Korea seeks to put long-range nuclear capable cruise missiles in practical use, in addition to ballistic missiles. If the series of the announcements about flying distances and the like are factual, it is concerning as they pose threats to peace and stability in the region.

c. Trends in Ballistic Missile Development

North Korea has driven ballistic missile development and attempted to improve related technologies and operation capabilities quite rapidly and in continuous manner. These trends have the following characteristics.

(a) Improvement of Missile-related Technologies

(i) Improvement of secrecy and instantaneity

North Korea appears to be seeking to improve its ability to conduct surprise attacks by enhancing secrecy and instantaneity to make it difficult to detect signs of a launch.

North Korea has repeatedly launched missiles from various platforms such as TELs, submarines, and railway cars. Using these platforms, launchers can be concealed and missiles could be launched from any position. It appears that North Korea aims to make it difficult to detect and identify signs of launch, and in turn, to intercept the missiles, by improving secrecy of launching.

In addition, since 2019, North Korea has repeatedly launched ballistic missiles using solid fuel in particular. Generally, solid fuel-propelled ballistic missiles are relatively easier to store and handle. Additionally, since they come preloaded with solid fuel, they can be quickly reloaded onto launchers and relaunched in a relatively short time. In these respects, they are considered militarily superior. Such characteristics are expected to contribute to improving the ability to conduct surprise attacks and retaliatory attacks.

(ii) Enhancement of penetration capabilities for Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD)

North Korea is advancing the development of ballistic missiles that fly at low altitudes on irregular trajectories in an attempt to breach other countries' missile defense networks.[45]

Furthermore, North Korea raised the development of "hypersonic gliding flight warheads" as one of its priority targets and it has repeatedly launched missiles it calls "hypersonic missiles." In particular, North Korea has been pushing ahead with launches of what it calls solid fuel-propelled "hypersonic ballistic missiles" since 2024. North Korea is developing hypersonic weapons with different ranges and modes of flight through the parallel development of different types of warheads (both conical and flat) in an attempt to make it more complicated for other countries to deal with them, while improving the instantaneity of its missile launch through transitioning to solid fuel-propelled missiles. In this way, North Korea is relentlessly pursuing missile development to make interception difficult and to breach missile defense networks.

(iii) Developing long-range missiles

North Korea consistently pursues development of long-range missiles with ranges covering the United States. North Korea's ICBM-class ballistic missiles "Hwasong-17," "Hwasong-18," and "Hwasong-19" are thought to have a range of over 15,000 km depending on the weight of their warheads, etc. This means the entire U.S. territory, including the East Coast, is within their range. Furthermore, an 11-axle TEL equipped with canisters (launch tubes) was unveiled in the October 2025 military parade, and the North Korean media mentioned that it was "the Hwasongpho-20 intercontinental ballistic missile, the most powerful strategic nuclear weapon system." It is clear that North Korea intends to continue to focus on developing long-range missiles in order to acquire deterrence against the United States.

For the operationalization of these ballistic missiles, it is considered necessary to possess technology capable of protecting the re-entry vehicle from the intense heat generated during atmospheric re-entry. However, further careful analysis is required to determine whether North Korea has in fact mastered such technology.

On the other hand, should North Korea make further progress in the development of long-range ballistic missiles, it may come to have a one-sided understanding that it has secured a strategic deterrence against the United States. However, if North Korea has such overconfidence and misperception regarding its deterrent power, it could lead to increased and escalated military provocations by North Korea in the region and could create situations that are

44 In January 2024, North Korea also test-fired a cruise missile it called "Pulhwasal-3-31," but details of the missile, including the differences with the conventional Hwasal, remain unknown.

45 SRBM-A, SRBM-B, and SRBM-D, as well as the rail-launched ballistic missile and the small-type SLBM with a configuration similar to that of SRBM-A, are believed to be capable of flying on irregular trajectories at lower altitudes than conventional ballistic missiles.

deeply concerning for Japan as well.



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

(b) Enhancement of Missile Operation Capabilities

North Korea has launched ballistic missiles in various patterns such as launching multiple missiles simultaneously, consecutive launches at very short intervals, and multiple launches from various launching points at specific targets.

First, cases have been seen of multiple missiles being launched from various locations using TELs at any time of day or night. Furthermore, North Korea has conducted firing drills and other training exercises combining SRBMs with various types of artillery, demonstrating its capability to launch multiple missiles simultaneously from locations of its choosing at times of its choosing.

Second, North Korea has conducted consecutive launches at very short intervals. For example, the SRBM C which North Korea refers to as a "super-large multiple rocket launcher" is thought to have been developed in order to enhance continuous firing capability. In fact, in one case, two SRBM Cs were launched at estimated intervals of under one minute.

Third, in some cases, North Korea launched multiple ballistic missiles and other weapons from different locations and hit designated targets.

Through these launches, North Korea is believed to be pursuing the enhancement of practical missile operation capabilities with saturation attack and the like in mind.

(4) Trends in Weapons Development in North Korea

a. 8th Party Congress Five-Year Plan

Chairman Kim specifically mentioned the development of various weapons as future military objectives at the 8th Congress of the KWP in January 2021. The goals presented at that time are believed to have been included in the "8th Party Congress Five-Year Plan."

With regard to nuclear weapons and missiles, Chairman Kim referred to the development of "tactical nuclear weapons" and increased production of "super-large nuclear warheads" as part of efforts to further advance nuclear technology, miniaturize and lighten nuclear weapons, and promote their tactical deployment. He also stated that North Korea would improve the accuracy against targets at ranges of up to 15,000 km and enhance its "preemptive and retaliatory nuclear strike capabilities." In addition, he referred to promoting research and development of multi-warhead technology, "hypersonic gliding flight warheads," nuclear-powered submarines, "underwater-launched strategic nuclear weapons" and solid fuel-propelled ICBMs, demonstrating its determination to pursue increasingly sophisticated and diverse attack capabilities. In addition, besides the nuclear and missile capabilities, development of reconnaissance means, including military reconnaissance satellites and unmanned reconnaissance aerial vehicles, was also mentioned.

In fact, since that year, North Korea has repeatedly launched missiles, seemingly in an effort to advance the process of the development plan presented at the Congress. In particular, North Korea has pursued research and development focused on the items identified as priority tasks in the plan.

For example, it was stated that the hypersonic missile research and development project was "one of five top-priority tasks of the five-year plan facing the field of strategic weapons" when it launched a missile referred to as "hypersonic missile Hwasong-8" in September 2021. Since then, North Korea has repeatedly launched multiple types of missiles it calls "hypersonic missiles" and has relentlessly pursued missile development to breach missile defense networks.

It appears that the development of a solid fuel-propelled ICBM was also presented as a priority issue in "the 8th Party Congress Five-Year Plan."[46] Actually, since the 8th Congress of the Party, North Korea has developed Hwasong-18 and Hwasong-19, solid fuel-propelled ICBM-class ballistic missiles, and has pushed ahead with launching them multiple times.

In addition, at the 9th plenary meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the KWP in December 2023, Chairman Kim evaluated that the launching of satellites would mark "a decisive advance in carrying out the prior and important tasks for modernizing the armed forces of the armed forces of the Republic set forth by the 8th Party Congress." Chairman Kim mentioned that the goal for the following year, 2024, was to launch three additional "reconnaissance satellites." In May 2024, North Korea once again proceeded with a satellite

46 North Korea stated in December 2022 that the "static firing test of high-thrust solid-fuel motor" was completed successfully. On this occasion, it was announced that Chairman Kim praised this highly, saying, "solved another important problem in carrying out the five priority tasks facing the strategic weapon field under the five-year plan."

launch using ballistic missile technology.[47]

In this way, North Korea has focused on research and development of the related technologies and aimed to further build up its military forces in line with the 8th Party Congress Five-Year Plan, in particular its priority issues.

b. Prospects for Weapons Development Going Forward

In February 2026, the 9th Congress of the KWP was held. Chairman Kim reviewed the period since the 8th Congress of the Party, and evaluated the achievements in "modernizing the national defense capabilities and rapidly enhancing the already secured military and technological strength."

At the same time, a policy concerning the strengthening of the military forces for the next five years was also revealed. Chairman Kim reiterated his assertion that North Korea had "fixed the position as a nuclear weapons state completely and absolutely irreversible" and demonstrated the stance of continuing to focus on the development and increased production of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, he mentioned that North Korea would "enhance the capabilities of the nuclear combat forces for an actual war" through various drills to become proficient in the operation of nuclear weapons, and stated that it would develop combat readiness for nuclear weapons.

In addition to the development of these kinds of nuclear weapons, Chairman Kim emphasized the importance of advancing the modernization of conventional forces and rapidly strengthening naval operational capabilities centered on "nuclear weaponization."

In the latest Congress, policies for the commissioning and deployment of various weapons were also presented. For example, enhanced "ICBM complexes of ground and underwater launching," "AI unmannd attack complexes," anti-satellite attack weapons, "electronic warfare weapons systems" and reconnaissance satellites were mentioned as new weapons that will be commissioned going forward. Furthermore, North Korea plans to proceed with the operational deployment of weapons, including the "600mm-calibre multiple rocket launcher," whose development has reportedly been completed, in order to "further strengthen the war deterrent."

In this way, Chairman Kim clearly reiterated his stance of continuously strengthening his nuclear capabilities as his policy for the next five years, while also presenting development goals for various weapons other than nuclear weapons and missiles, for example, unmanned assets and electronic warfare systems. At the latest Congress, North Korea emphasized that it would "study and develop the latest weapons and equipment corresponding to the goal of rapidly developing the military technology of the Republic's armed forces and putting them on a modern basis, in keeping with the global trend of defense science development." Going forward, it appears that North Korea aims to develop diverse weapon systems while taking account of developments in military science and technology in other countries.

4 Progress of Military Cooperation with Russia

(1) Trends in Military Cooperation

As Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues, North Korea is rapidly developing its cooperative relationship with Russia. In June 2024, Russian President Putin visited North Korea for the first time in 24 years and held a summit meeting with Chairman Kim. During the visit, both signed the Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which included a provision to provide military assistance in the event of an armed invasion, and Chairman Kim stated that relations between North Korea and Russia had entered a new stage, that of an alliance. (The treaty went into effect in December 2024.) Furthermore, another summit meeting was held in Beijing in September 2025 on the occasion of Chairman Kim's participation in the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. Chairman Kim noted that North Korea-Russia relations had expanded and advanced in all fields since the conclusion of the Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, while President Putin also expressed that relations with North Korea "have assumed an allied character." These statements highlighted the further deepening of North Korea-Russia relations.

The moves to strengthen relations with Russia are particularly evident in the military sphere. For example, since 2023, weapons and ammunition, including ballistic missiles, have been supplied from North Korea to Russia. It has been pointed out that North Korean artillery shells have been used in Russia's aggression against Ukraine and that North Korea supplied at least 100 ballistic missiles in 2024.[48] Such support has significantly contributed to Russia's sustained operational capability against Ukraine. Furthermore, North Korea dispatched troops to Russia from the second half of 2024 onwards.[49] Concerning this, in April 2025, both North Korea and Russia revealed that North Korean troops had participated in an operation to recapture Russia's Kursk Oblast from Ukraine, and that the North Korean troops'

47 It appears that the launch in May 2024 was a failed satellite launch.
48 According to the First Report of the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team.
49 According to the First Report of the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, North Korea is believed to have dispatched more than 11,000 troops to Russia in late 2024, and an additional 3,000 troops between January and March 2025.

participation in combat was a response based on Article 4 of the Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.[50] In addition, North Korea announced that it had dispatched engineering units from August of the same year in order to clear landmines in Kursk Oblast.[51]

On the other hand, it has been pointed out that Russia has provided North Korea with short-range air defense systems and electronic warfare systems since November 2024.[52]

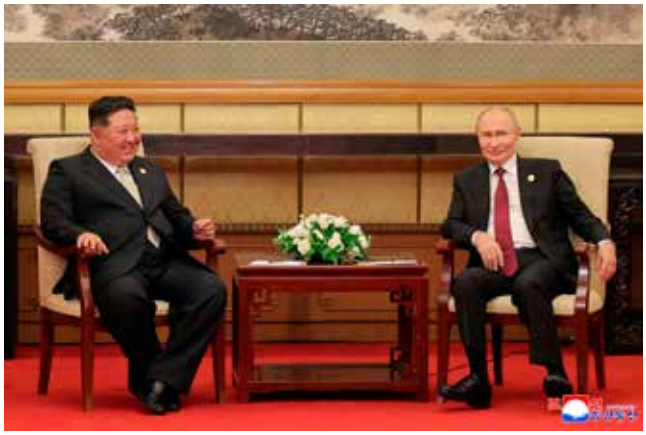
(2) The Impact on North Korea's Military Forces

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.

- Firstly, it has been pointed out that the guidance performance of North Korea's short-range ballistic missiles used in the aggression against Ukraine has been improved through data feedback provided by Russia.[53] There are concerns that the performance of North Korean missiles will be enhanced through actual combat use.
- Furthermore, in the context of North Korean ballistic missiles being supplied to Russia, Chairman Kim has mentioned the expansion of missile production capabilities.[54] There is a risk that the strengthening of production systems could lead to further development of North Korea's ballistic missile forces going forward.
- Concerning the dispatch of North Korean troops to Russia, Korean troops have gained experience in new forms of warfare, including the use of unmanned systems, through combat against Ukraine. There is a risk that the lessons learned through combat against Ukraine will be disseminated throughout the entire North Korean military in the future.
- In addition, there are deep concerns that Russia's nuclear and missile-related technologies may be transferred to North Korea in exchange for support for Russia. If they are transferred, this could significantly advance North Korea's nuclear and missile development, including hypersonic weapons, going forward.

The military trends in North Korea pose even graver and more imminent threats than ever before to Japan's security, and the further buildup of North Korea's military forces through military cooperation with Russia is seriously concerning from the perspective of the security of the region surrounding Japan. It is necessary to continue to closely monitor developments in military cooperation between North Korea and Russia with serious concern, based on the understanding that the security of the Euro-Atlantic is inseparable from the security of the Indo-Pacific.

See Chapter 4, Section 1-2-6 (Support from Allies and Like-Minded Countries)



Russia-North Korea Summit Meeting (September 2025)
[Korea News Service-Jiji]

5 Domestic Affairs

(1) Developments Related to the Kim Jong-un Regime

In North Korea, the power base centered on Chairman Kim has been solidified. The constitution of North Korea stipulates that the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission is "the supreme leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who represents the state." It has been pointed out that North Korea is governed under the leadership of the KWP and that Chairman Kim assumed the post of General Secretary of the KWP in January 2021.

(2) Economic Conditions

Economically, North Korea has faced chronic stagnation as well as energy and food shortages due to the structural vulnerabilities of its socialist planned economy, strengthened unilateral sanctions imposed by countries including Japan and the United States, and sanctions based on UN Security Council resolutions adopted in response to its nuclear tests

50 In Article 4 of this Treaty (the official Korean version) it is stipulated that "in case any one of the two sides is put in a state of war by an armed invasion from an individual state or several states, the other side shall provide military and other assistance with all means in its possession without delay in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter and the laws of the DPRK and the Russian Federation."

51 In June 2025, Russia announced that North Korea had decided to dispatch military engineers for mine clearance in Russian territory and military construction workers for infrastructure restoration.

52 According to the First Report of the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team.

53 According to the First Report of the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team.

54 For example, in December 2025, North Korea announced that when providing on-site guidance to a "major munitions industry enterprises," Chairman Kim referred to the production of missiles and artillery shells, stating that the "production plan for 2026 in a development-oriented way to meet the prospective requirements in the operation" and "it is necessary to further expand the overall production capacity."

and ballistic missile launches.[55]

Chairman Kim presented the "five-year plan for the national economic development" based on self-reliance and self-sufficiency in January 2021. Concerning this plan, at the end of 2024, Chairman Kim presented the direction for 2025 as "successfully completing the five-year plan and push forward with the preparations for the next stage of development in substantial way." At the 9th Congress of the KWP in February 2026, the five-year plan was assessed as basically completed and a significant step forward, allowing for confident optimism regarding the prospects for economic development going forward. Furthermore, at this Congress, a new five-year plan was presented, based on consolidating the achievements of the past five years and ensuring stable and continuous economic growth. It appears that even under difficult circumstances, North Korea will continue striving to improve its economic situation.

Nevertheless, as North Korea is unlikely to carry out any structural reforms that could lead to the destabilization of its current ruling system, it will face various challenges in making fundamental improvements to its current economic situation. Furthermore, it has also been pointed out that amid the difficult economic and food situation, the regime is wary of social unrest caused by the influx of information from abroad and is further strengthening its ideological control. This is notable from the perspective of the stability of the regime.

In addition, North Korea apparently attempts to evade sanctions of the UN Security Council, such as through involvement in illicit ship-to-ship transfers prohibited by UN Security Council resolutions.[56]

See Fig. I-3-4-9 (Sanctions based on UN Security Council Resolutions against North Korea)

Fig. I-3-4-9 Sanctions based on UN Security Council Resolutions against North Korea

Main content

Items	Sanction content	Related resolution
Crude oil	Restriction of annual supply to 4 million barrels or 525,000 tons	No. 2397 (December 2017)
Petroleum refined products	Restriction of annual supply to 500,000 barrels	No. 2397 (December 2017)
Coal	Total ban on imports from North Korea	No. 2371 (August 2017)
Ship offloading (ship-to-ship transfer)	Banned	No. 2375 (September 2017)

Summary of recent UN Security Council resolutions on sanctions against North Korea

Date	Resolution	Catalyst event	Main content
July 15, 2006	No. 1695	Seven ballistic missile launches (2006/7/5)	Request transfer prohibition on related goods and funds for nuclear and missile plans
October 14, 2006	No. 1718	First nuclear test (2006/10/9)	Prohibition on export and import of weapons of mass destruction related goods and large weapons
June 12, 2009	No. 1874	Taepodong-2 launch (2009/4/5), second nuclear test (2009/5/25)	Adoption of financial regulations
January 22, 2013	No. 2087	Taepodong-2 launch (2012/12/12)	Addition of six organizations and four individuals to sanctions
March 7, 2013	No. 2094	Third nuclear test (2013/2/12)	Tougher financial regulations and obligation to conduct inspections of goods suspected of transporting embargoed goods within one's own territorial waters
March 2, 2013	No. 2270	Fourth nuclear test (2016/1/6), Taepodong-2 launch (2016/2/7)	Ban on air fuel exports and supply and ban on coal and iron ore exports by North Korea (excluding those for personal livelihood or unrelated to North Korea's nuclear and missile plans)
November 20, 2016	No. 2321	Fifth nuclear test (2016/9/9)	Establishment of an upper limit on coal exports by North Korea (roughly USD 400 million/ 7.5 million tons a year)
June 2, 2017	No. 2356	Ballistic missile launches since 2016/9/9	Addition of four organizations and 14 individuals to sanctions
August 5, 2017	No. 2371	ICBM-class "Hwasong-14" launch (2017/7/4 and 7/28)	Total ban on coal imports, total ban on iron and iron ore imports, and establishment of an upper limit on the total number of work permits for North Korean workers for the first time
September 11, 2017	No. 2375	Sixth nuclear test (2017/9/3)	Addition of oil to supply restrictions for the first time, addition of textile products to the import ban, and ban on work permits for overseas workers
December 22, 2017	No. 2397	ICBM-class "Hwasong-15" launch (2017/11/29)	Further supply restrictions in the oil area, expansion of the scope of bans on trade (exports/imports) with North Korea bans, and return of North Korean workers to North Korea

(Note) Quotation marks indicate the names used by North Korea.

55 In recent years, North Korean fishing boats and Chinese fishing boats have been conducting illegal operations within Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) surrounding Yamato tai, creating a situation that threatens the safety of Japanese fishing boats operating in the EEZ. In this sea area, the Fisheries Agency and the Japan Coast Guard are working together to conduct strict surveillance and monitoring as well as law enforcement activities in the waters around Japan, including issuing warnings to foreign fishing vessels engaged in illegal fishing. See the Cabinet Annual Report "Implementation of Ocean-related Policies," the White paper on Fisheries, and the Japan Coast Guard Report for further details of the law enforcement activities.

56 In the period from the beginning of 2018 to the end of March 2026, the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) patrol aircraft and ships have observed 24 cases in which a North Korean-flagged tanker was sailing alongside a foreign-flagged vessel were anchored side-by-side on the high seas. Based on the government's comprehensive assessment, it is strongly suspected that the vessels were engaged in illicit ship-to-ship transfers.

6 Relations with Countries and Regions

(1) Relations with the United States

In June 2018 at the historic U.S.-North Korea summit meeting, Chairman Kim presented his intention to work toward the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. However, the second U.S.-North Korea summit meeting in February 2019 ended without any agreement being reached between the two countries. After that, while North Korea stated that the United States is its "biggest enemy," it has maintained that the key to establishing a new U.S.-North Korea relationship is the withdrawal of the United States' hostile policy toward North Korea.

North Korea voluntarily declared to stop "the test launch of inter-continental ballistic rockets" in April 2018. However, in January 2022, without progress in the U.S.-North Korea relationship, Chairman Kim ordered North Korean officials to "promptly examine the issue of restarting all temporarily suspended activities" based on the assessment that the "hostile policy and military threat by the United States have reached a danger line that cannot be overlooked anymore." In fact, North Korea restarted launching ICBM-class ballistic missiles from 2022. Chairman Kim stated that North Korea will thoroughly prepare for long term confrontation against the United States.[57]

In January 2025, the second Trump administration was inaugurated. President Trump has repeatedly expressed a willingness to engage in dialogue with Chairman Kim, but no resumption of official dialogue between the United States and North Korea has been confirmed to date. On the other hand, at the 9th Congress of the KWP in February 2026, Chairman Kim stated that he would firmly maintain the "toughest stand" as the keynote of his policy toward the United States, while also declaring his viewpoint that there was no reason why a good relationship with the United States could not be built if the United States respected North Korea's current position and withdrew its hostile policy toward North Korea.

Furthermore, the U.S. National Defense Strategy (NDS) published in January of the same year outlined the U.S. assessment of the current nuclear capabilities of North Korea. The NDS stated that North Korea's nuclear capabilities are growing in size and sophistication, and they present a "clear and present danger" of nuclear attack on the American Homeland. In addition, it clearly states that "South Korea is capable of taking primary responsibility for deterring North Korea with critical but more limited U.S. support. South Korea also has the will to do so." Attention will continue to be focused on developments both in the United States and North Korea and the nature of U.S. involvement in the situation on the Korean Peninsula going forward.

(2) Relations with the ROK

The three inter-Korean summit meetings in 2018 led to major progress in inter-Korean relations.[58]

Meanwhile, there has been no progress in inter-Korean relations since the breakdown of the U.S.-North Korea summit meeting in 2019. Following the inauguration of the previous Yoon Suk-yeol administration in 2022, which adopted a strict stance toward North Korea, North Korea also shifted to a more confrontational stance toward the South.

In December 2023, Chairman Kim expressed the relationship between North and South Korea as "the relations between two states hostile to each other." In January 2024, at the Supreme People's Assembly, he also asserted that "it is necessary to delete such expressions in the constitution as 'northern half' and 'independence, peaceful reunification and great national unity.'" All of this suggests a major shift in North Korea's awareness of the ROK.

The Lee Jae Myung administration inaugurated in June 2025 emphasizes north-south "peaceful coexistence" and "shared growth" and a "nuclear-free Korean Peninsula" and is exploring dialogue with North Korea, but North Korea has not shown any willingness to engage in dialogue. For example, in February 2026, Chairman Kim stated that he would not hold any discussions with the ROK and that he would regard the ROK as a "very hostile state" and an "eternal enemy."

(3) Relations with China

China is a vital political and economic partner for North Korea and maintains a degree of influence on North Korea. The "Sino–North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance" signed in 1961 is still effective, and China is currently North Korea's biggest trade partner. In 2024, trade volume between China and North Korea was very large, accounting for over 90% of North Korea's total trade (excluding trade between North Korea and the ROK and trade with Russia, which has not been disclosed since the aggression against Ukraine),[59] suggesting North Korea's dependence on China.

In regard to the situation in North Korea and its nuclear issue, China has stated that the issues should be resolved through dialogue and consultations based on the concept of a "dual-track approach" (denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the transition from the armistice mechanism to a peaceful mechanism) and the principle of phased

57 On July 17, 2023, Kim Yo-jong, Vice Department Director of the Central Committee of the KWP, said that the United States should know that its bolstered extended deterrence system will only make the Republic "go farther away from the negotiating table."

58 For example, an agreement on the Panmunjom Declaration, which confirms, among other matters, that the two parties agreed to completely cease all hostile acts against each other in every domain and confirmed the common goal of realizing a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. The summit meetings also led to an agreement on the Pyongyang Joint Declaration of September 2018, which refers to the ending of military hostilities, and the Agreement on the Implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration in the Military Domain, which prescribes concrete measures to ease inter-Korean military tensions.

59 According to an announcement by the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA)

Commentary

Outlook on North Korea's Nuclear and Missile Development in Light of the 9th Workers' Party Congress

At the 9th Congress of the Korean Workers' Party held in February 2026, Chairman Kim Jong-un reviewed the military achievements made since the previous 8th Congress, along with announcing new policies for the next five years.

Chairman Kim emphasized that irreversibly and permanently consolidating North Korea's position as a nuclear power had the "most important and strategic significance" among the achievements made since the 8th Congress. The two key steps that led to this achievement were cited as the adoption of the law on the nuclear force policy and the inclusion of a provision in the Constitution to "develop nuclear weapons to a higher level." The law on the nuclear forces policy, adopted in September 2022, sets forth conditions and other details on the use of nuclear weapons. At the time, Chairman Kim praised the adoption of the law, calling it "an epochal event that announced to the North Korean people and the rest of the world that we have legally enshrined a war deterrent as a means of national defense." Moreover, in September 2023, after the Constitution was amended to explicitly include the provision to "develop nuclear weapons to a higher level," Chairman Kim remarked that "the nuclear force-building policy has been made permanent as a fundamental law of the nation that cannot be undermined by anyone or anything." North Korea has repeatedly asserted that it has become a "nuclear power" through the establishment of such frameworks on nuclear weapons. For this reason, it is likely that, based on this perception, it will continue to unilaterally justify its nuclear and missile development and focus on strengthening its military capabilities.

At the 9th Workers' Party Congress, Chairman Kim indicated new policies for the next five years, one of which emphasized the deployment of already-developed weapons. Weapons scheduled for future deployment include a "strategic weapon systems for containing the strategic foes," "the 600 mm-caliber multiple rocket launchers," "the new-type 240 mm-caliber multiple rocket launchers," and "operational and tactical missile systems." Future actions taken by North Korea based on this policy raise serious concerns from the perspective of Japan's national security. For example, Short-Range Ballistic Missile A, whose range covers part of Japan, was referred to as a "tactical ballistic missile" when it was launched in May 2025, and it is possible that this is one of the weapons included in the "operational and tactical missile systems" mentioned at the latest Congress. The ballistic missile is believed to be capable of flying at low altitudes with an irregular trajectory, making it generally more difficult to intercept than conventional ballistic missiles. It has been reported that the missile is also being used against Ukraine, with growing concerns that its performance and operational capabilities will be further enhanced through actual use in combat.

If the deployment of different kinds of missiles and other weapons continues to progress, as was alluded to by Chairman Kim at the Congress, North Korea's missile forces will become more difficult for Japan to intercept, raising serious concerns from the perspective of Japan's missile defense. Furthermore, as North Korea continues to deploy various kinds of missiles, which it has positioned as a means of "war deterrent," there is a fear that it will overestimate its own deterrence capabilities and further escalate its military provocations.

With its ongoing missile development and repeated ballistic missile launches, North Korea's actions are severely undermining the peace and security of the region and wider international community. Moreover, the seemingly significant deepening of its military cooperation with Russia causes concern that this cooperation will lead to North Korea's military capabilities becoming further enhanced. Given that North Korea's military actions now pose an even graver and more imminent threat to Japan's national security than ever before, it is crucial to continue working in close cooperation with the United States and the Republic of Korea while carefully monitoring North Korea's actions to understand its future plans for strengthening its military capabilities based on the various policies indicated by Chairman Kim this time.

and synchronized actions. In recent years, China has demonstrated support for North Korea despite its repeated provocations by exercising its veto power alongside Russia on UN Security Council sanction resolutions proposed by the United States in response to North Korea's launching of ICBM-class ballistic missiles, citing that the current worsened situation on the Korean Peninsula was caused by the United States.

On September 3, 2025, Chairman Kim participated in the Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War held in Beijing. On the following day, September 4, he held a summit meeting with President Xi Jinping, marking the first China–North Korea summit in approximately six years. Neither side mentioned the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in their statements pertaining to the summit meeting.

(4) Relations with Russia

See Section 4-1-4 (Progress of Military Cooperation with Russia)

2 The ROK and the U.S. Forces Korea

1 General Situation

In the ROK, former president Yoon Suk Yeol, who declared "emergency martial law" on December 3, 2024, was impeached and removed from office and the Lee Jae Myung administration was inaugurated in June 2025. The Lee Jae Myung administration has stated that the former administration's pressure-based policy toward North Korea destabilized the situation on the Korean Peninsula and it will actively seek to improve relations with North Korea.

The U.S. Forces, mainly the Army, have been stationed in the ROK since the ceasefire of the Korean War. The ROK has established very close security arrangements with the United States primarily based on the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty. The U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) have been playing an important role in securing peace and stability of the region such as playing a vital role in deterring a large-scale armed conflict on the Korean Peninsula. The Lee Jae Myung administration acknowledges that the U.S.-ROK alliance has played a central role in prosperity and peace on the Korean Peninsula, and has indicated its intention to develop the alliance into a "future-oriented comprehensive strategic alliance," strengthening cooperation in not only security but also diverse fields such as trade and advanced science and technology.

In this context, the NDS of the second Trump administration was published in January 2026. This NDS outlined the U.S. assessment that the ROK is capable of taking primary responsibility for deterring North Korea with critical but more limited U.S. support and has also the will to do so, and in addition it states that this shift in the balance of responsibility is consistent with America's interest in updating the U.S. force posture on the Korean Peninsula. Attention will continue to be focused on the future nature of U.S. engagement on the Korean Peninsula and developments between the United States and the ROK regarding the USFK.

2 Defense Policies and Defense Reform of the ROK

The ROK has a defensive weakness, namely, its capital Seoul, which has a population of approximately 10 million, is situated close to the DMZ.

The Defense White Papers under the former Yoon Suk Yeol administration clearly stated that "the North Korean regime and military are an enemy of the ROK," but it will be necessary to closely monitor how the Lee Jae Myung administration, which shows a positive attitude toward improvement of relations with North Korea, describes North Korea in its official documents.

The ROK has continued to undertake national defense reforms. The Lee Jae Myung administration, following in the footsteps of the former administration, is gradually constructing a manned-unmanned teaming system to resolve the shortage of troops and minimize wartime casualties.

Furthermore, while presenting a stance of improving relations with North Korea, the administration is pointing out the need to respond to the threats from North Korea. With respect to the qualitatively and quantitatively upgraded threats from the nuclear, missile and conventional forces of North Korea, the administration intends to secure its own deterrent and to respond jointly through the U.S.-ROK alliance and trilateral Japan-U.S.-ROK security cooperation.

3 Military Posture of the ROK

The ROK's military capacity is as follows. The ground forces consist of 16 army divisions with approximately 320,000 personnel and 2 marine divisions with approximately 30,000 personnel; the naval forces consist of approximately 230 vessels with a total displacement of approximately 320,000 tons; and the air forces (Air Force and Navy combined) consist of approximately 570 combat aircraft.

The ROK Forces has been modernizing its military forces—not only its Army but also its Navy and Air Force—in order to

establish an omni-directional defense posture.

The ROK is focused on building the "ROK Three-Axis Defense System," which consists of the Kill Chain, Korea Air and Missile Defense (KAMD), and Korea Massive Punishment & Retaliation (KMPR). The building of the system has steadily progressed to date. For example, the Strategic Command established to effectively integrate and operate the forces assigned to "ROK Three-Axis Defense System" was created in 2024, and the launch of the first five reconnaissance satellites of the ROK's military, which are positioned as the foundation of the "ROK Three-Axis Defense System," was completed.[60] The Lee Jae Myung administration has also declared that it will continue to promote the enhancement of the "ROK Three-Axis Defense System."

In terms of ballistic missiles, the ROK appears to have operationally deployed Hyunmoo-2 missiles with an estimated range of 300-800 km and other missiles. The ROK also promotes the development of "high power" and "ultra-high power" type missiles. For example, it is said that a test launch of a Hyunmoo-4 missile with a two-ton warhead and 800-km firing range was successfully conducted in 2020. In addition, a Hyunmoo-5 missile equipped with an even heavier warhead was seen at a military parade in October 2024.[61] Moreover, the ROK announced that it successfully conducted a test launch of an SLBM in 2021.

With regard to cruise missiles, the ROK appears to have operationally deployed the Hyunmoo-3 surface-to-surface cruise missile, which is believed to have a range of about 500-1,500 km, and the Haeseong series ship-to-ship/ship-to-surface cruise missiles, which are believed to have a maximum range of 1,000-1,500 km.

Furthermore, in October 2025, the ROK announced that it would build nuclear-powered submarines and received the approval of the United States for the initiative. In response, the ROK released its Basic Plan for the Development of Nuclear-Powered Submarines in May 2026. The plan outlines a policy of proceeding with development to enable the launch of the first submarine in the mid-2030s and deploying it operationally in the latter half of the 2030s or later. It also includes provisions for developing and constructing the submarines domestically in the ROK and for using low-enriched uranium as fuel. On the other hand, it appears that there continue to be issues that require coordination with the United States regarding securing construction sites[62] and fuel,[63] so attention will continue to be focused on developments between the United States and the ROK going forward.

Furthermore, the ROK has been actively working on equipment export in recent years. In particular, in 2022, the annual export resulted more than doubled that of 2021 on a contract basis, reaching USD 17.3 billion, including a large-scale export contract with Poland that is striving to enhance its defense capabilities after Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Although the value of the 2023 to 2025 contracts was down from the record-high value of 2022, the ROK Government is aiming for rapid progress to becoming one of "the world's four leading defense industrial powers"[64] by pursuing diverse projects and expanding government support.

Defense spending in FY2026 (regular budget) increased by about 7.5% from the previous fiscal year to nearly KRW 65.8642 trillion, marking the 27th consecutive year of increases since 2000. Furthermore, in the Joint Fact Sheet of the U.S.-ROK summit meeting (held in October 2025), which was released in November of the same year, the ROK declared that it would "increase its defense spending to 3.5% of GDP as soon as possible."

See Fig. I-3-4-10 (Changes in the ROK's Defense Budget (Past 10 Years))

4 U.S.-ROK Alliance and U.S. Forces Korea

The United States and the ROK have taken various steps to deepen the U.S.-ROK Alliance in recent years. The two countries regularly confirm the strengthening of the U.S.-ROK Alliance at various levels.

As specific undertakings through the Security Consultative Meeting (SCM), a consultative body headed by the defense ministers of both countries, the two countries approved the "Tailored Deterrence Strategy," designed to enhance deterrence against North Korean nuclear and other WMD threats, at the 45th U.S.-ROK SCM in 2013.

At the 46th SCM in 2014, the two countries agreed on "Concepts and Principles of the ROK-U.S. Alliance

60 Of the five reconnaissance satellites possessed by the ROK's military, three have become operational, while test evaluation results are pending for one of the other two and the other is undergoing testing.

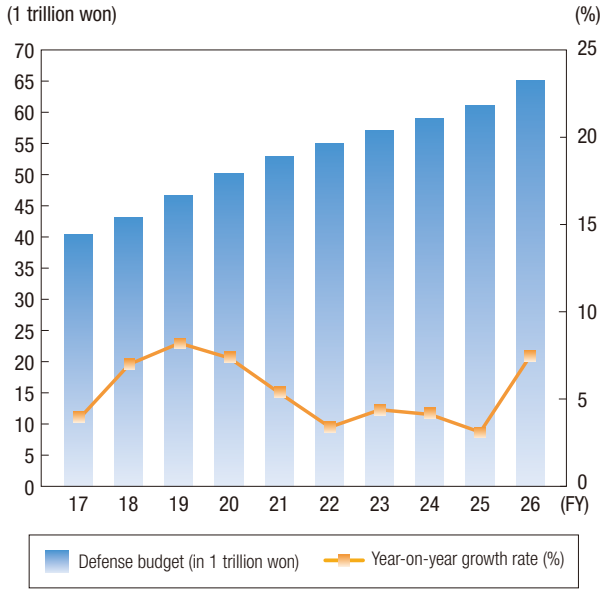
61 In media reports in the ROK, it has been pointed out that operational deployment of the Hyunmoo-5 has commenced.

62 On October 30, 2025, U.S. President Trump mentioned on his social media site that the ROK's planned nuclear-powered submarines would be built at the Hanwha Philly Shipyard in Philadelphia (acquired by the ROK company Hanwha Group in 2024). Meanwhile, on November 14 of the same year, the ROK's Director of the Office of National Security, Wi Sung-lac, explained at a press conference following the release of the U.S.-ROK summit meeting Joint Fact Sheet that consultations with the United States were underway regarding the possibility of constructing nuclear-powered submarines in the ROK.

63 The ROK has mentioned that it will build nuclear-powered submarines that do not carry nuclear weapons driven by nuclear power, and the Joint Fact Sheet issued following the U.S.-ROK summit in November 2025 stated that the United States and the ROK decided to cooperate closely on the procurement of fuel for the nuclear-powered submarines. At present, the U.S.-ROK Nuclear Cooperation Agreement does not permit the military use of nuclear materials and equipment transferred under the agreement.

64 The ROK Government has not commented on the specific meaning of this objective, but according to media reports in the ROK, it has been pointed out that the gist of it is that ROK's goal is to become the fourth largest exporter of defense equipment in the world, following the United States, Russia, and France, which have held the top three positions in terms of share of global arms exports over the past five years (according to SIPRI).

Fig. I-3-4-10 Changes in the ROK's Defense Budget (Past 10 Years)



(Note) According to the website of the Ministry of National Defense of ROK (accessed in May 2026)

Comprehensive Counter-missile Operations (4D Operational Concept)" to tackle North Korean ballistic missile threats. At the 47th SCM in 2015, the implementation guidance on the 4D Operational Concept was approved.

Recently, at the 53rd SCM in 2021, the United States and the ROK approved new Strategic Planning Guidance (SPG) for the first time in 11 years and agreed to update their operation plans based on the SPG. Moreover, at the 54th U.S.-ROK SCM in 2022, both countries agreed to several measures to enhance extended deterrence, such as strengthening the deployment of U.S. strategic assets,[65, 66] around the Korean Peninsula. At the 55th U.S.-ROK SCM in 2023, the "2023 Tailored Deterrence Strategy," revised for the first time in 10 years, was approved, and it was confirmed that it reflects guidelines on how to utilize all categories of U.S. military capabilities, including U.S. nuclear capabilities as well as the ROK's conventional capabilities. Moreover, at the 57th U.S.-ROK SCM held in November 2025, the first to be held after President Lee Jae Myung took office, it was emphasized that the ROK would play the leading role in the



U.S.-ROK summit meeting (October 2025) [EPA-Jiji]

defense of the Korean Peninsula, and it was confirmed that the United States would enhance its deterrence posture against all regional threats to its allies, including North Korea.

At the summit level, the ROK stated in the Washington Declaration of the U.S.-ROK summit meeting[67] in April 2023 that the country recognized the importance of trusting the U.S. commitment for extended deterrence and reaffirmed the ROK's commitment to its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The U.S.-ROK Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG), whose establishment was announced at the summit meeting, held its inaugural meeting on July 18, 2023, and on the same day, a U.S. strategic nuclear submarine made its first port call in the ROK in about 40 years. At the U.S.-ROK summit meeting held in July 2024, the "United States and Republic of Korea Guidelines for Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Operations on the Korean Peninsula,"[68] which were considered at the 3rd NCG meeting in June of the same year, were approved. Furthermore, at the U.S.-ROK summit meeting after the inauguration of the Lee Jae Myung administration, it was decided to strengthen U.S.-ROK cooperation through consultation mechanisms, including the NCG.

Since August 2022, the U.S.-ROK military exercises have been conducted under a framework in which the regular command post exercise Freedom Shield (FS) is held in the first half of a year and Ulchi Freedom Shield (UFS) integrated with government exercises is held in the latter half with field training exercises conducted in parallel. During the first UFS exercise held since the inauguration of the Lee Jae Myung administration in August 2025, 22 of the approximately 40 planned field training exercises were postponed and

65 According to the ROK Defense White Paper 2022, U.S. strategic assets are the military capabilities provided by the United States that effectively deter external attack and provocations and ensure an overwhelming response. They include the U.S. nuclear triad (ICBMs, strategic bombers, and strategic submarine ballistic nuclear (SSBNs)), as well as some conventional forces (carrier strike groups, B-1B bombers, and cruise-missile nuclear submarines (SSGNs)).

66 The ROK stated that it is increasing the frequency and strength of deployment of U.S. strategic assets to a level equivalent to that of full-time deployment.

67 Then President Biden stated in the joint press conference after the U.S.-ROK summit meeting that the United States will not deploy nuclear weapons in Korean Peninsula.

68 At the U.S.-ROK summit meeting, it was announced that the U.S.-ROK Guidelines for Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Operations on the Korean Peninsula represent a joint statement aimed at maintaining and strengthening a reliable and effective nuclear deterrence policy and posture within the alliance, while also providing guidelines to the political and military authorities of the U.S.-ROK alliance.

conducted outside the exercise period.[69] Furthermore, during the FS exercise in March 2026, it was stated that, apart from the 22 field training sessions conducted during the exercise period, the remaining exercises would be conducted throughout the year outside of the exercise period, so there has been a trend toward a reduction in the scale of field training conducted during the exercise period since the inauguration of the Lee Jae Myung administration.[70] On the other hand, it appears that the Lee Jae Myung administration will also focus on securing deterrence based on the U.S.-ROK alliance. For example, it conducted the third U.S.-ROK Combined Nuclear and Conventional Integration Tabletop Exercise (CNI TTX), called Iron Mace, in September 2025, following the former administration.

At the same time, the two countries deal with such issues as the transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON) to the ROK[71] and the realignment of USFK.

For the transfer of wartime OPCON to the ROK, aiming to complete the transition by December 1, 2015, the two countries have reviewed the approach of transfer from the existing combined defense arrangement of the United States and ROK Forces, to a new joint defense arrangement led by the ROK Forces and supported by the U.S. Forces.

Nevertheless, based on the increasing seriousness of North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, the two sides decided at the 46th SCM in 2014 to re-postpone the transfer of wartime OPCON, and to adopt a conditions-based approach, i.e., implementing the transition when conditions such as the ROK Forces' enhanced capabilities are met.[72] At the 50th SCM in October 2018, it was decided that following the transfer of wartime OPCON, a ROK military officer will serve as commander of the Future Combined Forces Command, replacing the current arrangement of a U.S. military officer serving as the commander of the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces.

Initial Operational Capability (IOC) verification was conducted as the first step to evaluate ROK Forces' capability[73] in combined command post exercise in August 2019, and the important role of the exercise to verify IOC was confirmed. Furthermore, Full Operational Capability (FOC) evaluation was conducted as the second step in the UFS exercise in 2022, and in the FOC evaluation successfully conducted at the 54th SCM in 2022, all evaluation points were confirmed to meet the standard. Meanwhile, consideration of the FOC verification results is ongoing, and at the 57th SCM in 2025 it was confirmed that the FOC verification of the Future Combined Forces Command Headquarters would be conducted in 2026.[74]

The Lee Jae Myung administration has stated that it will actively proceed with the transfer of wartime OPCON within its term in office, and has mentioned that it will aim to reach agreement on the completion of the FOC verification and the timing for the transfer of wartime OPCON at the next, 58th SCM.

With regard to the realignment of the USFK, an agreement had been reached in 2003 on the relocation of the U.S. Forces' Yongsan Garrison located in the center of Seoul to the Pyeongtaek area, south of Seoul and on the relocation of the U.S. Forces stationed north of the Han River to the south of the river. Subsequently, however, the agreement has been partially revised, particularly in relation to the postponement of the transfer of wartime OPCON, which has necessitated the continued presence of some USFK personnel at Yongsan Garrison and the retention of counter-fire forces north of the Han River to address the threat posed by North Korea's long-range rocket artillery.

In July 2017, the U.S. Eighth Army headquarters relocated to the Pyeongtaek area; in June 2018 the headquarters of USFK and UN Command, and in November 2022, the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command Headquarters also relocated to the same area.

Concerning defense burden sharing, whereby the ROK government bears a portion of the total stationing costs of the USFK to ensure a stable stationing environment, in October 2024, the United States and ROK agreed to the 12th Special Measures Agreement (SMA), which will be applied starting in 2026. In 2026, the first fiscal year of the agreement, the rate will be 8.3% higher than in 2025, but, starting in 2027, the rate of increase will be linked to the ROK's consumer price index (CPI) instead of the ROK's defense budget, which is considered more burdensome for the ROK.

69 In December 2025, the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff announced that in order to maintain a balanced combined defense posture and guarantee a suitable training environment, all of the 22 field training exercises that had been postponed from among the approximately 40 field training exercises planned during the UFS exercise period had been completed.

70 For example, at the time of the FS exercise conducted in March 2025 under the former administration, the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff announced that 51 field training exercises were conducted during the exercise period.

71 The United States and the ROK have had the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command since 1978 in order to operate the U.S.-ROK combined defense system to deter wars on the Korean Peninsula and to perform effective combined operations in the case of a contingency. Under the U.S.-ROK combined defense system, OPCON over the ROK Forces is to be exercised by the Chairman of the Korea Joint Chiefs of Staff in peacetime and by the Commander of the USFK, who concurrently serves as the Commander of the Combined Forces Command, in a contingency.

72 The United States and the ROK have enumerated the following transition conditions under the conditions-based approach: (i) the military capabilities necessary for leading a combined defense, (ii) the alliance's comprehensive capability to respond to North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, and (iii) a security environment on the Korean Peninsula and in the region conducive to a stable OPCON transition. (From the website of the ROK Ministry of National Defense)

73 The United States and the ROK have set three steps for the capabilities standards used to verify the transition condition (i) (refer to note 72).

74 Full Mission Capability (FMC) evaluation as the third step is scheduled for when the FOC verification is completed.

5 Relations with Countries and Regions

(1) Relations with China

China and the ROK have made continuous efforts to strengthen their relations. China opposes the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system[75] to USFK, saying that it undermines the strategic security interests of China. Although both countries agreed in October 2017 to continue communicating on the THAAD-related issues that China was concerned about through channels established between their respective military authorities, conflicting views still remain.[76] Furthermore, in recent years, confrontations have occurred in the China-ROK Provisional Measures Zone (PMZ) in the Yellow Sea,[77] where China has been installed structures and the ROK has been demanding their removal. While these kinds of concerns exist, since the inauguration of the Lee Jae Myung administration, two China-ROK summit meetings have been held, and there are signs of a recovery in economic relations. Concerning the China-ROK PMZ, the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced in February 2026 that it had confirmed that one of the three structures installed by China[78] had been moved outside the PMZ, and the ministry also said that it was continuing to seek further progress on the issue through constructive consultations with China.[79] With momentum building for improved China-ROK relations in this way, attention will continue to be focused on developments going forward.

(2) Relations with Russia

The ROK and Russia have agreed on cooperation in the areas of military technology, defense industry, and military supplies. Both countries held Defense Strategy Dialogue in August 2018 and agreed to promote the dialogue to vice minister level and, in November 2021, also agreed to set up hotlines between Navies and between Air Forces.

The ROK has implemented sanctions against Russia and provided military supplies and other resources to Ukraine in a show of solidarity with the international community following Russia's aggression against Ukraine since February 2022. In addition, when it was confirmed in October 2024 that North Korean soldiers had been dispatched to Russia, a government delegation of the ROK visited Belgium to provide information to NATO and the EU. At the same time, even as North Korean soldiers dispatched to Russia participate in fighting against Ukraine, the ROK maintains a cautious stance regarding the provision of lethal weapons to Ukraine. As the Lee Jae Myung administration places importance on maintaining a diplomatic balance with four neighboring countries (Japan, the United States, China, and Russia), attention will continue to be focused on how it will maintain stable relations with Russia, given the situation in Ukraine.

75 A ballistic missile defense system designed to intercept short- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles in their terminal phase from the ground. It captures and intercepts targets at high altitudes outside of the atmosphere or in the upper atmosphere. Additionally, after North Korea went ahead with its nuclear test in January 2016, it was temporarily deployed by the U.S. Forces Korea in 2017.

76 After the China-ROK foreign ministers' meeting in August 2022, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China insisted that the ROK Government stated the policy of "One Restriction" in which the ROK limits the operation of the THAAD already deployed to U.S. Forces Korea, in addition to the "Three Nos" (no participation in the United States' missile defense system, no consideration for supplement deployment, no development of Japan-U.S.-ROK security cooperation to military allies) that the ROK government is said to have announced externally in 2017.

77 This is a temporary zone established in the sea area where the EEZs of China and the ROK overlap. Under the China-ROK Fisheries Agreement, all activities in this zone except navigation and fishing (for example, the installation of facilities other than fishing facilities and the development of underground resources) are prohibited.

78 China states that two of these structures are simple aquaculture facilities and one is a facility for the personnel managing the aquaculture facilities, and claims that the structures do not violate the domestic law of China, international law, or the China-ROK Fisheries Agreement. It has been pointed out that the structure moved on this occasion is the one structure said to be a management facility.

79 In January 2026, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China explained that the movement of this structure was due to an independent decision by a Chinese company. At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China mentioned that China's position concerning the aquaculture facility was unchanged, and that China and the ROK are appropriately managing their differences of opinion on maritime issues.

Section 5 Russia

1 General Situation

President Vladimir Putin, who has been seeking the revival of Russia as a strong and influential power, commenced full aggression against Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Russia's aggression against Ukraine undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and it is also a serious violation of international law including the Charter of the United Nations, which forbids the use of force. The aggression shakes the foundations of the international order and is understood as the most serious and direct threat to defense in the European area.

Russia also makes clear its stance that it continues to work on the modernization of strategic nuclear weapons, and repeats speech and behavior that can be taken as nuclear weapons threats in the middle of the aggression against Ukraine.

In recent years, Russian forces around Japan have introduced new types of equipment and continued active operations. In addition, there has been movement to further enhance military cooperation with China, such as joint flights by Russian and Chinese bombers, joint navigation of warships, and continued mutual participation in exercises. Military trends of Russia in the Indo-Pacific region including Japan, combined with this strategic cooperation with China, are strong concerns for security. Also taking into account movements in the aggression against Ukraine, close observation of the situation is required.

See Chapter 2 (Russia's Aggression and Defense by Ukraine)

2 Security and Defense Policies

1 Strategic and Policy Documents

Russia set out its objectives and strategic priorities of domestic and foreign policies in the "National Security Strategy" revised in July 2021.

The National Security Strategy states that Russia's policies through now to strengthen its defense capabilities, domestic unity, and political stability, and modernize its economy, and develop its industrial base, have strengthened Russia as a sovereign state capable of pursuing an independent domestic and foreign policy and effectively opposing external pressures. This indicates Russia's awareness of the existence of external threats and its belief that it is a "strong state" that will not succumb to them. It also states that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) military activities around Russia are a military threat and that the deployment of U.S. intermediate- and short-range missiles in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region is a threat to strategic stability.

In the defense section, the Strategy commits to giving continued priority to the role fulfilled by Russia's military force, and to ensuring strategic deterrence and preventing military conflict by maintaining a sufficient level of nuclear deterrent capability and combat readiness of Russian military forces, including the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (AFRF).

The Military Doctrine, revised in December 2014 as a document substantiating the principles of the National Security Strategy in the military sphere, states the existing view that while the probability of an outbreak of a large-scale war is decreasing, military risks to Russia are increasing, such as the movement of NATO's military infrastructure closer to Russia's borders including the expansion of NATO, and the establishment and deployment of strategic missile defense (MD) systems. In addition, the doctrine expresses growing alarm, defining the following as new military risks: NATO's military buildup; the realization of the U.S. Global Strike concept; the rise of global violent extremism (terrorism); the formation of governments in neighboring countries that carry out policies threatening Russia's interests; and the incitement of ethnic, social, and religious confrontations in Russia.

In addition, the doctrine raises characteristics of modern military warfare as being the massive use of precision weapons, hypersonic weapons, electronic warfare equipment, all types of autonomous vehicles, and the like, as well as the phenomena of automation and centralization of operations through a network of automatic management systems. In addition, without using the phrase "hybrid warfare," the doctrine also points out the integrated use of military force and political, economic, informational and other non-military measures, as well as participation in hostilities by irregular armed groups and private military companies.

The Military Doctrine positions nuclear weapons as an essential component for preventing the outbreak of nuclear wars and military conflicts that use conventional weapons. Regarding the criteria for its use, it states Russia reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in retaliation not only for the use of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), but also in the event of invasion using conventional weapons, where the survival of the country itself is imperiled.

In June 2020, for the first time, Russia released a policy

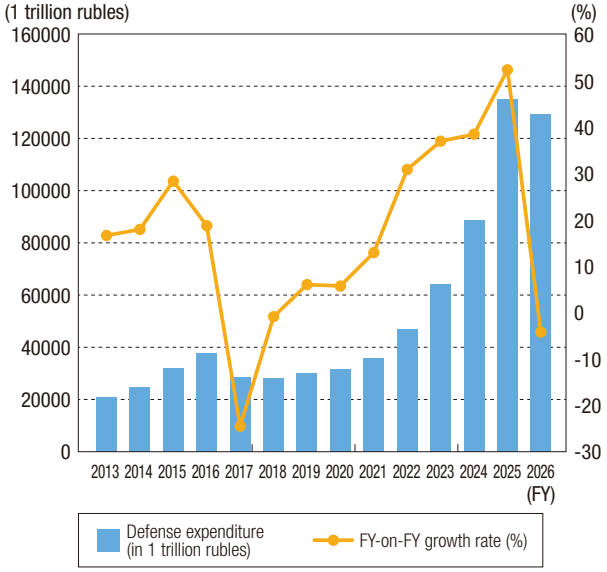
document, "Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence," which is equivalent to the so-called nuclear doctrine. It was revised in November 2024, and the criteria for the use of nuclear weapons were changed from "a threat to the very existence of the nation" to "a critical threat to sovereignty and/or territorial integrity." According to the revised Basic Principles, in addition to "individual states [...] that consider the Russian Federation as a potential adversary" and "military coalitions (blocs, alliances)" in which these countries participate, an attack by any "non-nuclear state" with the participation or support of a nuclear state is also subject to nuclear deterrence by Russia. The document also clearly states the conditions for Russia to proceed with the use of nuclear weapons, military risks subject to nuclear deterrence, and other details while also clearly identifying where Russia's "red lines" are in terms of nuclear deterrence.

2 Defense Budget

Russia's defense budget had generally remained at around 3% of GDP since FY2017. However, following the aggression against Ukraine, Russia has continued to increase its defense budget, and in FY2025, the revised budget reached an all-time high of approximately 13.5 trillion rubles (approximately 6.3% of GDP). The defense budget for FY2026 (initial budget) was approximately 12.9 trillion rubles, which represents the first decrease following the aggression against Ukraine; however, national security spending on paramilitary organizations amounted to approximately 3.9 trillion rubles, an increase of approximately 13% compared to the previous year.[1]

See Fig. I-3-5-1 (Changes in Russia's Defense Expenditure)

Fig. I-3-5-1 Changes in Russia's Defense Expenditure



(Note) Data announced by the Russian Ministry of Finance and Federal Treasury (FY2013–2022: actual expenditures; FY2023: expenditures budget (provisional) as of September 1, 2023; FY2024–2025: revised budget amounts; FY2026: initial budget amount)

3 Military Reform

By 2021, Russia established joint strategic commands for four military districts (the Western, Southern, Central, and Eastern Districts) as well as the Northern Fleet (in charge of units facing the Arctic), and the military forces have been jointly operated under each District Commander in this system. However, since the commencement of the aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, Russia has shown some movements to increase strength as well as to enlarge and reorganize units.

Then Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu proposed increasing the total strength to 1.5 million troops, establishing two military districts in Moscow and Leningrad, reorganizing several existing brigades into divisions, deploying one new corps to the Finland border region, and other measures to President Putin at an expanded meeting of the Defence Ministry Board in December 2022. At a meeting in December 2023, it was reported that the number of military personnel had reached 1.15 million during the year and that two combined arms armies, a mixed aviation corps, four divisions, 18 brigades, and 28 regiments had already been newly formed. In February 2024, President Putin signed a presidential decree to create the Moscow Military District and Leningrad Military District, resulting in the Northern Fleet losing its status as a joint strategic command and military district. In September 2024, he signed another presidential decree to increase the number of military troops to 1.5 million.

1 According to documents published by Russia's Ministry of Finance and Federal Treasury

Furthermore, in November 2025, the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that it had established a new branch, the "Unmanned Systems Forces."

Regarding the Navy and the Aerospace Forces, although military districts maintain operational command during wartime, naval fleets and naval aviation units are excluded from their jurisdiction during peacetime according to a presidential decree which enetered into force in February 2025 to amend the "regulations on military districts," and this move is a reversion to the system that Russia used in and before 2010. This is believed to be because the Russian Navy and Aerospace Forces placed more importance on establishing unified operation by each General Headquarters than on a unified operation system at the military district level.

It will be necessary to continue to closely monitor the trends in the Russian military's chain of command, organizational restructuring, and changes in its joint operational posture since the aggression against Ukraine from the perspective of how the Russian military will reflect the lessons it learned in Ukraine in its operational posture.

3 Military Posture and Trends

Russia's military forces are comprised of forces such as the AFRF, the Border Guard Service of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB), and the Federal National Guard Service of the Russian Federation. The AFRF consists of three services and two independent forces: Ground Forces; Navy; Aerospace Forces; Strategic Missile Forces; and Airborne Forces.

In developing its military capabilities, Russia is conscious of the United States and, while ensuring a balance in its nuclear forces, is expanding its equipment similar to that of advanced nations, such as land-attack cruise missiles capable of being precision-guided and drones, for its conventional forces that it perceives as inferior to those of advanced nations. As for its asymmetric responses, it is believed that Russia places importance on improving its so-called Anti-Access/Area-Denial (A2/AD) capabilities through long-range surface-to-air and surface-to-ship missile systems and electronic warfare equipment.

See Fig. I-3-5-2 (Location and Strength of Russian Military (image))

Fig. I-3-5-2 Location and Strength of Russian Military (image)



		Russia
Total military forces		Approx. 1,260,000 personnel
Ground forces	Ground troops	Approx. 750,000 personnel
	Tanks	T-90, T-80, T-72, etc. Approx. 3,460 (Not including mothballed tanks. Approx. 5,560 including mothballed ones)
Sea power	Warships	Approx. 1,170 vessels, Approx. 2,060,000 tons
	Cruisers	3 vessels
	Destroyers	10 vessels
	Frigates	20 vessels
	Submarines	53 vessels
	Marines	Approx. 10,000 personnel
Air power	Combat aircraft	Approx. 1,340 aircraft
	Modern fighter aircraft	MiG-29 × 108, Su-30 × 131, MiG-31 × 141, Su-33 × 17 Su-25 × 166, Su-34 × 134, Su-35 × 127 (Fourth generation fighter aircraft: Total 824), Su-57 × more than 21 (Fifth generation fighter aircraft: Total 21)
	Bombers	Tu-160 × 13 Tu-95 × 51 Tu-22M × 50
Reference	Population	Approx. 140.00 million
	Term of service	1 year (In addition to conscription, there is a contract service system)

(Note) Sources include "The Military Balance 2026," etc. The ground forces figure includes 680,000 Ground Forces personnel, as well as 35,000 airborne personnel and 30,000 troops from the "separatist forces" in eastern Ukraine that Russia announced it had "incorporated" into the AFRF.

1 Nuclear and Missile Forces

Russia places a strong emphasis on its nuclear forces not only to maintain its international status and ensure a proper balance with U.S. nuclear capabilities, but also to compensate for the significant attrition of its conventional forces amid the ongoing aggression against Ukraine. To that end, it is working to maintain a high state of readiness while modernizing various platforms and early warning systems.

Regarding strategic nuclear forces, Russia possesses intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and long-range bombers comparable to the United States in scale.

In 2011, Russia started deploying the ICBM "Yars," which is considered a multi-warhead version of the ICBM "Topol-M." It was pointed out that the large **ICBM "Sarmat,"** intended to replace the ICBM "Voyevoda" which was made in Ukraine during the Soviet era, may have repeatedly failed in its launch tests between 2023 and 2025. However, the Russian government announced a successful launch in May 2026, and the missile is reportedly scheduled for deployment by the end of 2026. Eight Borey/Borey-A class Nuclear-Powered Ballistic Missile Submarines (SSBN), which carry the new-type SLBM Bulava, were commissioned. Five such vessels have already been deployed to the Pacific Fleet, and in the future, Russia plans to deploy five to the Northern Fleet as well. The modernization renovation of Tu-95 bombers and the new production of Tu-160 bombers continues, and the Russian Ministry of Defence has announced that two new Tu-160 bombers were delivered in 2025.

As for non-strategic nuclear forces, Russia is working to deploy various non-strategic missiles such as **the land attack missile system "Iskander,"** which is believed to be capable of carrying either conventional or non-strategic nuclear warheads, **the sea-launched cruise missile system "Kalibr,"** the air-launched cruise missile (ALCM) "Kh-101," and **the air-launched ballistic missile (ALBM) "Kinzhal."** Russia places these missiles as "non-nuclear deterrence by precise guided weapons," and considers them important.

As for the new Oreshnik intermediate-range ballistic missile, Russia has announced that it was used in attacks against Ukraine on a total of three occasions by May 2026, following President Putin's first announcement of its use in November 2024. In addition, in December 2025, Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov stated that a brigade equipped with the Oreshnik missile[2] had been formed during the year.

ICBM "Sarmat"



ICBM "Sarmat" [AFP-Jiji]

[Specifications, performance]
Under development

[Description]
Advanced large (silo-launched) ICBM. It is believed to be available for various types of warheads as a response to advanced missile defense systems and to be guided with Russian satellite navigation system GLONASS. 46 missiles scheduled to be deployed.

Surface-to-surface missile system "Iskander"



Surface-to-surface missile system "Iskander" [EPA-Jiji]

[Specifications, performance]
Maximum firing range:
500 km

[Description]
There are ballistic and cruise missile variants. The ballistic missile type is said to fly at a lower altitude than normal ballistic missiles and to take an irregular trajectory during the terminal phase.

Sea-launched cruise missile system "Kalibr"



Sea-launched cruise missile system "Kalibr" [SPUTNIK/Jiji Press Photo]

[Specifications, performance]
Speed: Mach 0.8
Range: Submarine-launched type (anti-ground) approximately 2,000 km; Surface-launched type (anti-ground) approximately 1,500 km

[Description]
Used in Syria and Ukraine. Can be loaded on various platforms, and the Russian Navy continues to acquire loaded ships.

ALBM "Kinzhal"



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

[Specifications, performance]
Speed: Mach 10 or more
Range: 500 km (Total range with combat action radius of loaded aircraft: 2,000 km)

[Description]
ALBM loaded on a fighter that can be maneuvered during flight. Some point out that ALBM is an air-launched version of a ground-to-ground short-range ballistic missile system "Iskander."

2 According to then U.S. Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Singh, this intermediate-range ballistic missile was developed based on the Russian ICBM "Rubezh."

2 New Types of Weapons

Russia has opposed ongoing missile defense system build-ups by the United States domestically and abroad in recent years.

Russia has announced that it is developing the following various advanced weapons in order to penetrate missile defense systems deployed in the United States and other countries, that can be countermeasures for Russian ballistic missiles which are the foundations of Russia's nuclear forces.

- **Hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) "Avangard,"** which is claimed to be capable of flying at speeds greater than Mach 20 in the intercontinental atmosphere
- **Sea-launched hypersonic cruise missile (HCM) "Zircon,"** which has a believed range of 1,500 km with the maximum speed of Mach 9
- Nuclear-powered cruise missile "Burevestnik," which is capable of flying at lower altitudes with no substantial range limitation
- Nuclear-powered unmanned underwater drone weapon "Poseidon," which is claimed to be able to navigate at high-speed in the deep sea

Of these new weapons, the HGV "Avangard" has already been deployed, and the HCM "Zircon" is believed to have been deployed because Russia announced in January 2023 that the Gorshkov-class missile frigate RFS Admiral Gorshkov, which is equipped with this HCM, is going to be deployed to the high seas as part of the Northern Fleet. In addition, in February 2024, President Putin stated that the Russian military used "Zircon" missiles in Ukraine. Furthermore, in October 2025, President Putin stated that tests of "Burevestnik" and "Poseidon" were conducted, and that they had successfully activated the latter's nuclear propulsion system for the first time.

Regarding Russia's own missile defense equipment, it is reported that the delivery of advanced **surface-to-air missile system "S-500"** to each unit started in spring of 2022, and it was announced that test launches of an advanced ballistic missile intercept missile system were conducted in November 2022. In addition, in December 2025, Defence Minister Andrei Belousov mentioned that an air and missile defense division had been formed within the Aerospace Forces for the first time, and that a regiment equipped with the S-500 system had been deployed.

HGV "Avangard"

[Description]
This missile is said to fly within the atmosphere at speeds exceeding Mach 20, evading missile defense (MD) systems by altering its altitude and trajectory. It is reportedly carried by the UR-100UTTKh and the R-36M2 (Voevoda), and is expected to be deployed with the Sarmat in the future. It is believed that 12 missiles were deployed as of the end of 2023.



HGV "Avangard"
[SPUTNIK/Jiji Press Photo]

HCM "Zircon"

[Specifications, performance]
Speed: Mach 9
Range: 1,500 km

[Description]
Ship-borne HCM sharing its launcher with "Kalibr" cruise missiles. Started to be deployed in January 2023. Ground-to-ship version is reportedly under development.



Gorshkov-class frigate RFS Admiral Gorshkov, believed to have launched the HCM "Zircon"
[SPUTNIK/Jiji Press Photo]

3 Conventional Forces and Other Issues

Russia has conducted research and development for equipment based on its State Armament Program (GPV). However, it is pointed out that several factors, such as the need to cover the loss of equipment from the aggression against Ukraine, and very low availability of machine tools and various parts due to economic sanctions, are hindering the continuation of the GPV.

Ground Forces continue tests for advanced equipment such as T-14 tanks and Koalitsiya-SV self-propelled 155 mm howitzers.

The Aerospace Forces announced that deployment of the pre-production model of the so-called "fifth-generation fighter aircraft" Su-57 was started, and that it is putting effort into integration of unmanned aircraft and manned aircraft for UAV development.

The Russian Navy plans to increase the rate of modernization of its equipment to 70% by 2027. Because the development of surface vessels for coastal waters is being completed, the Navy will now move on to building surface vessels for the open sea.

Currently, Russia is said to be discussing a "State Armament Program (GPV) for 2026–2036." In December 2025, Defence Minister Belousov indicated that the program is based on four

Surface-to-air missile system "S-500"

[Description]
Ground-to-air missile system succeeding "S-400." It is believed that pre-production models are currently experimentally deployed in air defense units around Moscow.



New type of surface-to-air missile system "S-500" [AFP-Jiji]

main principles: (1) clearly defining priorities;[3] (2) designing the program based on the requirements of the Armed Forces' future combat capabilities;[4] (3) synchronizing research and development work, procurement of weapons and equipment, and infrastructure development; and (4) taking into account defense industry enterprises' productivity improvements.

During a meeting to discuss the GPV held in June 2025, President Putin highlighted the need to establish a versatile air defense system capable of effectively neutralizing all types of aerial attack methods, as well as the need to ensure that satellite constellations for various purposes are placed in orbit in a timely and complete manner. In addition, he states that it the program is expected to serve as an effective means of implementing the "development strategy for the Navy until 2050."[5]

4 Space and Electromagnetic Domain

The AFRF has also been stepping up its activities in the fields of space and the electromagnetic spectrum in recent years. Russia is believed to be promoting the development of anti-satellite weapons such as the "Nudol" anti-satellite missile system. In November 2021, Russia announced that it would conduct a satellite destruction test using an anti-satellite missile. Since 2013, Russia has put satellites into both low and geostationary orbits to conduct rendezvous and proximity operations (RPO), which have repeatedly been observed engaging in frequent RPO with other countries' satellites on geostationary orbits.

In the electromagnetic spectrum domain, since 2009, the AFRF has established an Electronic Warfare (EW) Unit, and many new EW systems have been procured and distributed or allocated to each service and force. In particular, it has been pointed out that in Ukraine, various electronic warfare equipment, including the Pole-21, are being deployed on the front lines and used against the Ukrainian military's GPS-guided artillery shells and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

See Chapter 4, Section 3-1 (Trends in Space Domain), Chapter 4, Section 3-3-2 (Each Country's EW Initiatives)

5 Trends Related to the AFRF (General)

Since 2010, the AFRF has been conducting large-scale round-robin exercises in each military district, with the objective of verifying the combat readiness of the military districts, etc.[6] These exercises are helping to improve the long-distance mobilization capability of the AFRF. In September 2025, the Russia-Belarus joint strategic exercise "Zapad 2025" was held in the Leningrad Military District and the Moscow Military District (originally scheduled for 2023, but it was canceled). Approximately 10,000 personnel participated in the exercise, which included joint training with multinational forces involving personnel from India, Iran, and other countries. The training incorporated lessons learned in Ukraine, such as tactics for dealing with UAVs and unmanned surface vehicles (USVs), and ammunition drop training using first-person view (FPV) drones.

Among exercises for nuclear and missile forces, in February 2022, just prior to the start of the aggression against Ukraine, a large-scale missile exercise was conducted across Russia using strategic nuclear forces such as ICBMs and SLBMs as well as missile forces capable of carrying conventional or tactical nuclear warheads (Iskander, Kalibr, Kinzhal, and Zircon). In addition, similar missile exercises for strategic nuclear forces were also conducted in October 2022, October 2023, and October 2024. In October 2025, the Russian Ministry of Defence also announced that it had conducted a missile exercise involving live launches of ICBM "Yars," SLBM "Sineva" and ALCMs. Furthermore, the Russian Ministry of Defence took steps to maintain the readiness of its units and conducted exercises to test non-strategic nuclear forces for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union in response to provocative statements and threats from Western officials. These exercises were conducted in three stages, specifically in the Southern Military District in May 2024, the Leningrad Military District and Belarus in June 2024, and the Central Military District and Southern Military District in July 2024, and activities conducted during each exercise included simulated "Iskander-M" missile launches.

In the Arctic Region, Russia is developing coastal surveillance radar networks for enhanced warning and surveillance. At the same time, Russia is rebuilding airfields and deploying Tu-22M medium-range bombers and MiG-

3 Systems defined as high-priority clarify the core posture of the future military, including strategic nuclear forces, space systems, air defense systems, communications systems, electronic warfare systems, command-and-control systems, unmanned systems, robots, and equipment based on new technologies. These systems are estimated to account for about half of the spending under the new GPV.

4 Rather than focusing on the quantity of equipment as in the past, the GPV is intended to be designed based on specific requirements; for example, for the strategic nuclear forces, the ability to penetrate the missile defenses of a potential adversary; for air defense, the ability to repel aerial attacks; for the space forces, the ability to provide detailed reconnaissance intelligence, high-speed communications, and navigation data for the use of precision-guided weapons.

5 Approved by President Putin on May 30, 2025. The contents of the document are classified. Presidential Aide Patrushev noted that this was the first time in modern history for Russia to adopt such a strategic document, mentioned that the document contained an analysis of the capabilities of major naval powers, assessed the Russian Navy's current state and capabilities in light of experience gained during special military operations, and set forth basic requirements for the fleet's composition in future combat, its primary missions in peacetime and wartime, and mechanisms for shaping the future vision of the Navy.

6 The exercises were conducted primarily in the Eastern, Central, Southern, and Western Military Districts, and they are respectively called "Vostok (East)," "Tsentr (Center)," "Kavkaz (Caucasus)," and "Zapad (West)."

31 interceptor fighters, while also deploying surface-to-air missiles and surface-to-ship missiles to develop sufficient preparedness for dealing with airborne threats from the north and attacks from ships. Along with these developments, Russia has built a large-scale residential facility for personnel at the base in two places within the Arctic Region.

In addition to the development of such military facilities, the AFRF has also been conducting such activities as various exercises by naval vessels, strategic nuclear deterrence patrols by SSBN, and patrol flights by long-range bombers. For example, the comprehensive Arctic expedition "Umka-2022" was held in the Chukchi Sea in 2022. In contrast, the tactical exercise "Finval-2023" was held in 2023, in both the Bering Sea, which is outside the Arctic Ocean, and the Chukchi Sea, suggesting that the AFRF is strengthening its defensive position in the Arctic by expanding the area in which it conducts exercises. In addition, in July 2024, Chinese and Russian bombers participated in a joint flight over the Chukchi Sea and Bering Sea. Furthermore, Tu-95 bombers flew over the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea in June 2023, and some believe that these activities were conducted to contain Finland, which joined NATO in April 2023, and Sweden, which joined in March 2024.

Russia thus appears to be stepping up military activities, so close scrutiny of developments in this regard will be required.

6 Russian Forces in the Vicinity of Japan

Russia newly established the Eastern Military District and the Eastern Joint Strategic Command in 2010. Ground Forces, the Pacific Fleet, and the Air Force and Air Defense Units have been placed under the Military District Commander, who conducts unified operation of these services. Meanwhile, regarding the Navy and Aerospace Forces, as mentioned earlier, the presidential decree to revise the countries "regulations on military districts" has excluded naval and air units from their military districts' jurisdiction during peacetime, marking a return to the system Russia had used before 2010.

Even as Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues, Russia is strengthening its nuclear forces. In the vicinity of Japan, it appears to be intensifying its focus on defending the area around the Sea of Okhotsk, which is the operational zone of its strategic nuclear-powered submarines.

The current presence of the AFRF in the Far East region is significantly smaller than it was at its peak. However, a considerable scale of military forces, including nuclear forces, still remains in the region. In recent years, Russia has also been deploying the latest equipment in the Far East. It announced that the percentage of new equipment in the Eastern Military District was 56% as of December 2021.

Given that the AFRF has set their basis of operation on maintaining the combat readiness of their strategic nuclear units and dealing with conflicts through the inter-theater mobility of its round-the-clock readiness units, it is necessary to keep our attention on the trends of the AFRF in the Far East region while also keeping in mind the trends of units in other regions.

(1) Nuclear Forces

As for strategic nuclear forces in the Far East region, approximately 35 Tu-95 bombers are deployed in Ukrainka in Amur Oblast. In addition, there have been reports that the Russian Ministry of Defence has plans to newly deploy Tu-160 bombers in the Far East, and some have suggested that a portion of the fleet has been moved to the Far East following Ukraine's Operation Spiderweb, so it will be necessary to keep an eye on future deployment trends of these bombers. Regarding strategic nuclear submarines, five Borey-class/Borey-A-class SSBNs equipped with SLBMs have been deployed in an around the Sea of Okhotsk, and some of the existing nuclear submarines are also being modernized and upgraded.

See Chapter 4, Section 1 (New Ways of Warfare Seen in Russia's Aggression against Ukraine and Related Challenges)

(2) Ground Forces

The Eastern Military District now consists of 31 brigades and two divisions with approximately 80,000 personnel in total, including motorized rifles (mechanized infantry), tanks, artillery, surface-to-surface missiles, material and technology security (logistics), and air defense, as well as naval infantry divisions and brigades equipped with amphibious operations capability. The Eastern Military District has introduced new equipment, such as the "Iskander" surface-to-surface missile system, "Bal" and "Bastion" surface-to-ship missiles, and the "S-400" surface-to-air missile system.



Surface-to-ship missile system "Bal"
[SPUTNIK/Jiji Press Photo]



Surface-to-ship missile system "Bastion"
[SPUTNIK/Jiji Press Photo]



Su-35 fighter aircraft
[AFP-Jiji]

(3) Naval Forces

The Pacific Fleet is stationed or deployed at its main bases in Vladivostok and Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy. The fleet consists of approximately 50 major surface combatants and 20 submarines, roughly 10 of which are nuclear-powered. In addition, warships equipped with the Kalibr cruise missile, a precision-guided weapon capable of carrying both tactical nuclear and conventional warheads, have also been deployed successively to the Pacific Fleet since 2021. As of the end of FY2025, deployed warships included one Udaloy III-class destroyer and four improved Kilo-class submarines in Vladivostok as well as one **Steregushchiy III-class frigate** and two Yasen-M-class nuclear-powered submarines in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy.

(4) Air Forces

In the Eastern Military District, Russia deploys approximately 290 combat aircraft from its Aerospace Forces and Navy combined. Existing models are being modernized, and in addition to the Su-35 fighters and the Su-34 fighter-bombers, the new Su-57 is being introduced to improve their capabilities.

Steregushchiy-class frigates



Steregushchiy III-class frigates

[Specifications, performance]
Full-load displacement: 2,235 tons (for the type without "Kalibr"), 2,500 tons (for the type with "Kalibr")
Maximum speed: 26 knots
Main armament: SS-N-30A anti-ground cruise missile (anti-ground "Kalibr," maximum range: 1,500 km), SS-N-27A anti-ship cruise missile (anti-ship "Kalibr," maximum range: 660 km), SS-N-26 anti-ship cruise missile ("P-800 Onix," maximum range: 300 km), 9M96 surface-to-air missile (maximum range: 60 km)
On-board aircraft: One helicopter (Ka-27)

[Description]
Russian Navy's new type of frigate. One frigate armed with "Kalibr" cruise missiles and four without are assigned to the Pacific Fleet.

(5) Operations in the Vicinity of Japan

In the vicinity of Japan, the AFRF has been actively continuing its activities, including exercises and drills which are believed to be conducted for objectives such as verifying the results of the military reform.

The number of exercises carried out by the Russian Ground Forces in the areas adjacent to Japan has decreased from the peak.

With regard to naval vessels, their activities are generally increasing in recent years. For example, various exercises and long-distance voyages have been carried out by Pacific Fleet vessels, along with patrols by nuclear-powered submarines.

In April 2023, the commander of the Pacific Fleet was replaced for the first time in 11 years, and the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that a surprise inspection of the Pacific Fleet was conducted with the participation of more than 25,000 personnel and more than 160 vessels. Defence Minister Shoigu explained that the objective of this inspection was to "prevent the aggression of an enemy into the southern Sea of Okhotsk," indicating that Russia intended to show off the capability of the Russian Navy to actively operate in the Sea of Okhotsk, which Russia considers crucial as an operating area for strategic nuclear submarines even while engaged in aggression against Ukraine. In addition, President Putin stated during a related exercise that military power "can be used in conflicts on all fronts." It is believed that his statement aimed to emphasize that the naval forces in the Far East are maintaining the combat readiness even while ground forces are dispatched from the Eastern Military District to Ukraine.

Furthermore, in January 2026, it was confirmed for the first time that a Vishnya-class information gathering ship had circled the Sakishima Islands during an extended period of navigation around the Sakishima Islands and the main island of Okinawa.

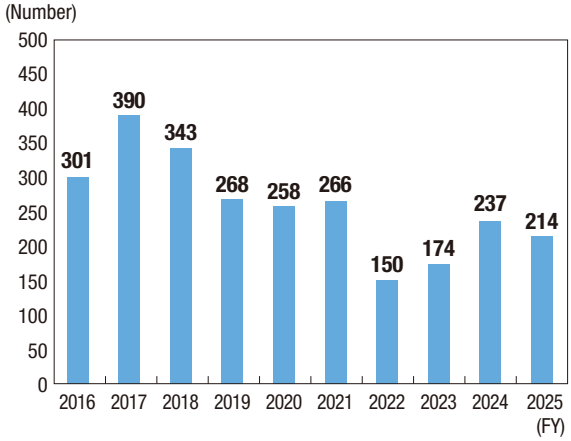
Regarding aircraft, since the resumption of the patrol activities by its strategic aviation units in 2007, Russia has been increasing flights by long range bombers. Also, there were flights of Tu-95 bombers refueled in mid-flight and

supported by A-50 early warning and control aircraft and Su-27 fighters as well as flights of Tu-160. Russian forces have continued their active operations in the vicinity of Japan even after Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Two Tu-95 bombers escorted by two fighters were confirmed flying around Japan in December 2022; October 2023; April, July, and October 2024; January, August, and October 2025; and January 2026.

In addition, in September 2024, two Tu-142 patrol aircraft circled Japan, and one IL-38 patrol aircraft intruded into Japanese territorial airspace north of Rebun Island, Hokkaido, three times in a single day, resulting in an Air Self-Defense Force fighter to launch flares as a warning. In addition, in March 2026, the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that multiple MiG-31 fighter aircraft armed with the ALBM "Kinzhal" had conducted aerial refueling training over the Sea of Japan.

See Fig. I-3-5-3 (Changes in the Number of Scrambles against Russian Aircraft), Part III, Chapter 1, Section 1-2-2 (Warnings and Scrambles in Preparation against Airspace Violation)

Fig. I-3-5-3 Changes in the Number of Scrambles against Russian Aircraft



4 Russian Forces in Japan's Northern Territories

Since 1978 during the former Soviet Union era, Russia has redeployed Ground Forces units on Kunashiri, Etorofu, and Shikotan Islands of the Northern Territories, which are inherent territories of Japan.

While the Russian troop strength is thought to be far less than that at peak times, one division, which belongs to a corps still stationed in South Sakhalin, is located on Kunashiri and Etorofu Islands. Furthermore, tanks, armored vehicles, various types of artillery, anti-air missiles, and unmanned reconnaissance vehicles are deployed.

In recent years, Russia has been upgrading the facilities of its troops located in the Northern Territories. It is also deploying new equipment such as surface-to-ship missile systems belonging to its Navy and fighter aircraft belonging to its Aerospace Forces, conducting large-scale exercises, and continuing its vigorous military activities under the illegal occupation of the Northern Territories, which are inherent territories of Japan.

Some point out the background for such moves as being the rising military importance of all of the Sea of Okhotsk, an operating area of SSBN. The Russian military continues to conduct active operations not only in the Northern Territories, but also in South Sakhalin and the Chishima Islands, whose jurisdiction has not been determined.

In recent years, the deployment of major new equipment in the Northern Territories has included the announced deployment of surface-to-ship missile systems to Etorofu and Kunashiri Islands in 2016, and in August 2018, three Su-35 fighters were reportedly deployed at the new civilian airport on Etorofu Island, which was opened to military and civilian dual use in January of that year.

As for equipment of the Ground Forces, in December 2020, media related to the Russian Ministry of Defence reported the deployment of **"S-300V4" surface-to-air missile** (maximum firing range of 400 km) in Etorofu and Kunashiri Islands. It has been revealed that the S-300V4s on both islands have disappeared since the aggression against Ukraine. The missing S-300V4s are believed to have been diverted for use in Ukraine, and the impact of continued operations in Ukraine is also evident in Russia's air defense posture in the Far East. Furthermore, in January 2022, it was announced that in the previous year, the tanks of the units located in the Northern Territories had been replaced with T-80BV tanks, which are suitable for operation in cold regions.

Military exercises have also continued in the Northern Territories. In June 2021, landing and anti-landing exercises were conducted on Etorofu Island, Kunashiri Island, and South Sakhalin, involving over 10,000 military personnel, 500 ground equipment and machines, 32 aircraft, and 12 vessels.

In addition, in the vicinity of Sakhalin and the Chishima Islands, which, like the Northern Territories, are adjacent to the

Surface-to-air missile system "S-300V4"

[Specifications, performance]
Maximum firing range: 400 km
Maximum altitude: 37 km

[Description]
Air defense missile said to have capabilities to deal with stealth aircraft.



Surface-to-air missile system "S-300V4" [SPUTNIK/Jiji Press Photo]

Sea of Okhotsk, it is reported that the AFRF newly deployed the S-400 surface-to-air missile system to South Sakhalin in February 2021, the surface-to-ship missile system Bastion to South Sakhalin at the end of 2021, Matua (Matsuwa) Island of the Chishima Islands in December 2021, and Paramushir Island of the Chishima Islands in December 2022, and a surface-to-ship missile system to Urup (Uruppu) Island in October 2025. There are reports on the establishment of a new coastal missile brigade placed in South Sakhalin, with jurisdiction over units located on Etorofu and Kunashiri Islands. It is necessary to monitor with strong concern the Russian military movements in the Far East, including the Northern Territories, while taking into account developments in the aggression against Ukraine.

5 Relations with Countries and Regions

1 General Situation

On March 31, 2023, President Putin approved the new Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation for the first time since 2016. In this document, Russia condemns Western countries for adopting anti-Russian policies and emphasizes cooperation with countries such as China and India, while stating that it aims to build a multipolar international order. Moves to strengthen collaboration with China in particular have been seen since the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, seemingly in inverse proportion to the deepening of Russia's conflict with Western countries, and is significant especially since the aggression against Ukraine in February 2022.

2 Relations with the United States

President Putin has striven to deepen cooperative relations with the United States in the economic domain, while opposing the United States on any action Russia considers as "a U.S. attempt to encroach on Russia's strategic interests."

On the military front, feeling that the United States' installation of missile defense systems both at home and abroad—including in Europe and the Asia-Pacific—undermines global and regional security, Russia has criticized these moves for upsetting the strategic balance. Russia is also moving forward with the development of new strategic weapons that are said to be capable of reliably penetrating missile defense systems.

In regard to arms control between the United States and Russia, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty ended in August 2019 during the first Trump administration after having gone through a series of processes originating from the withdrawal announcement of the United States side. In November 2020, the United States pulled out of the Open Skies Treaty, which was signed by the Western countries and Russia allowing its participants to mutually conduct unarmed observation and surveillance flights, and this was followed by Russia announcing its withdrawal in January 2021.

On the other hand, with regard to the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), which set the upper limit of strategic nuclear forces for Russia and the United States, although both countries agreed on its unconditional extension for five years in January 2021, just before the expiration of the treaty in February 2021, President Putin unilaterally declared "holding the treaty in abeyance" in February 2023, which is not stipulated in the treaty. In September 2025, President Putin stated that it was prepared to maintain central quantitative limits on weapons regulated by the treaty for one year following February 2026 if the United States did so as well, but the treaty expired during the same month without seeing any concrete progress.

The United States' National Defense Strategy (NDS) released in January 2026 notes that Russia possesses the world's largest nuclear arsenal, which it continues to modernize and diversify, as well as undersea, space, and cyber capabilities that it could employ against the U.S. homeland. In addition, this NDS states that the U.S. Department of War is preparing to defend against Russian threats to the U.S. homeland. Russia has responded to this matter by stating that U.S. military and strategic plans remain premised on potential conflict, regardless of the current political situation, and that it is necessary to build partnerships with other countries rather than relying solely on dialogue with specific major powers.

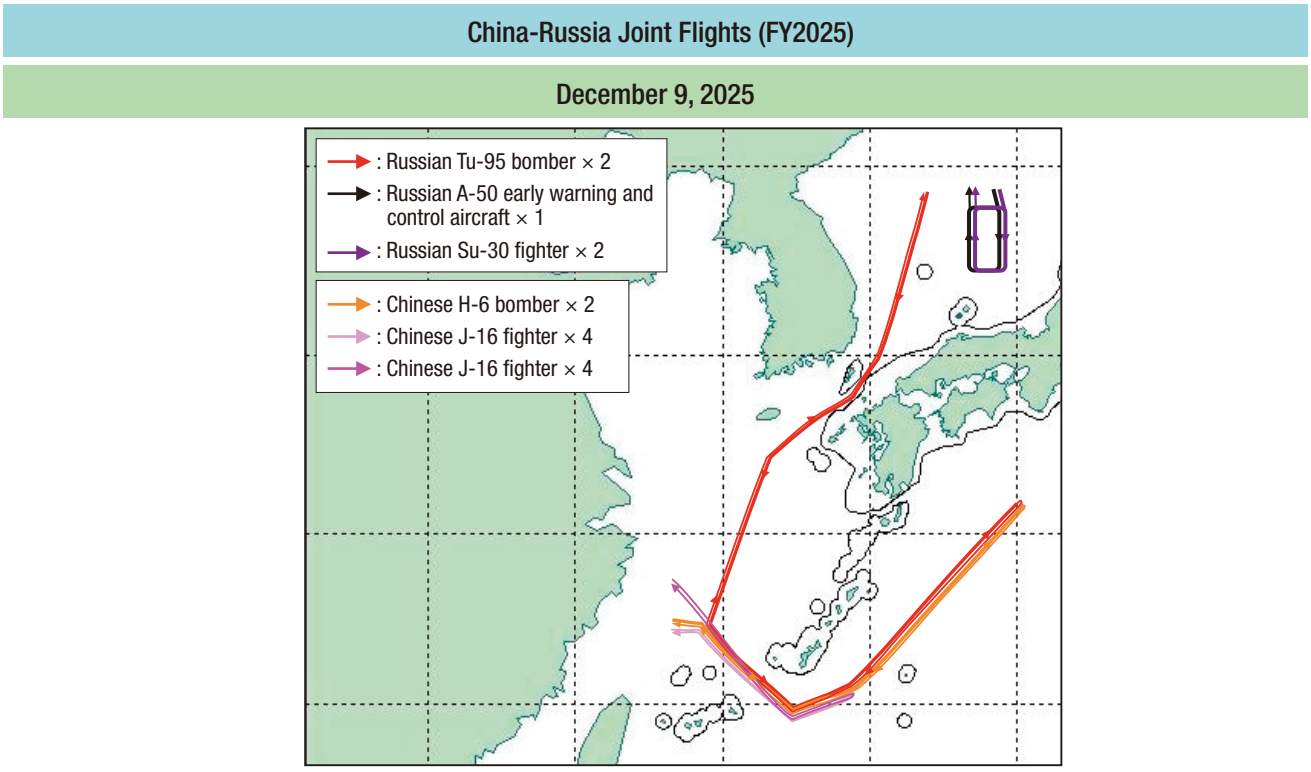
See Chapter 2, 3-2 (How NATO Member States and Other Countries Deal with the Situation)

3 Relations with China

Russia has exported military equipment such as surface-to-air missile systems, fighter jets, and submarines to China since the 1990s until recent years. Russia also continues to advance close military cooperation even during the aggression against Ukraine, and Russia and China conduct various joint military actions.

See Fig. I-3-5-4 (China-Russia Joint Flights (FY2025)), Section 2-3-2 (Relations with Russia)

Fig. I-3-5-4 China-Russia Joint Flights (FY2025)



4 Relations with North Korea

In June 2024, President Putin visited North Korea, where he signed a Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (effective in December 2024), which included a promise to provide military assistance in the event of an armed invasion. At the joint press conference after the Russia-North Korea Summit Meeting, President Putin stated that this treaty will not preclude the development of military-technical cooperation with North Korea.

See Section 4-1-4 (Progress of Military Cooperation with Russia)

5 Relations with Former Soviet Republics

Russia positions the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with former Soviet republics as one of its most important foreign policy objectives. Russia considers its vital interests to be concentrated in this region. It stations its troops in the Collective Security Treaty Organization[7] (CSTO) member states Armenia (which declared its intention to withdraw from the CSTO in February 2024), Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Belarus, as well as Moldova (Transnistria), Georgia (South Ossetia, Abkhazia), and Ukraine (Crimea). Through the conclusion of an alliance and strategic partnership treaty with Abkhazia in November 2014, the conclusion of an alliance and integration treaty with South Ossetia in March 2015, and other efforts, Russia has been working to ensure its military influence.

However, today, after more than 30 years have passed since the collapse of USSR, none of the former Soviet Union countries except Belarus support Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Some consider that Russia's influence on the former Soviet area will decline still further in the wake of the aggression against Ukraine.

Russia indicates moves to intensify military involvement with Belarus along with the start of the aggression against Ukraine. President Aleksandr Lukashenko of Belarus

7 CSTO is a military alliance consisting of six member states, namely Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Armenia. Article 4 of the 1992 Collective Security Treaty, which is the grounds for establishing the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), states that, in the event of an act of aggression against any of the member states, "all the other Member States at request of this Member State shall immediately provide the latter with the necessary help, including military one, as well as provide support by the means at their disposal in accordance with the right to collective defence pursuant to article 51 of the UN Charter."

requested support from President Putin for the modification of Belarusian Air Force aircraft to specifications for equipment of nuclear weapons in June 2022, and President Putin agreed. It was announced in February 2023 that Belarus deployed an "Iskander" surface-to-surface missile system received from Russia. In July 2023, it was announced that the defense ministers of the two countries had signed documents regarding procedures for storing Russian tactical nuclear weapons on Belarusian territory. In December 2023, Belarusian President Lukashenko stated that the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons that Russia had delivered to the Belarusian territory was completed in October 2023. Under Russia's revised Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence (the so-called nuclear doctrine), Russia added attacks on Belarus to the conditions under which it would use nuclear weapons. In addition, in December 2024, the leaders of Russia and Belarus signed a security treaty that imposes an obligation on the countries to mutually defend each other, including the use of Russian tactical nuclear weapons deployed in Belarus. Furthermore, in September 2025, Russia and Belarus conducted the joint strategic exercise Zapad 2025, which was announced to have included training in the operation of Russia's non-strategic nuclear weapons and the new intermediate-range ballistic missile "Oreshnik." In December 2025, the Russian Ministry of Defence released a video to show that it had deployed a Strategic Missile Forces unit equipped with the "Oreshnik" system to Belarus.

In the Caucasus region, Azerbaijan launched a military operation in September 2023 to make Armenian forces withdraw from the "Nagorno Karabakh Republic," which had unilaterally declared independence on Azerbaijan's territory and had been exercising effective control over the region. After being attacked by Azerbaijani forces, the "Nagorno Karabakh Republic" surrendered in September and signed an agreement to dissolve the republic by January 2024.

As a result of this conflict, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, which had been exercising effective control over part of Azerbaijan's territory for more than 32 years since the end of the Soviet Union, was dissolved.

The Russian armed forces, stationed as peacekeeping forces in the republic (withdrawn from the republic in June 2024), were unable to prevent the military conflict, which caused Armenia, a CSTO member state and Russia's military ally, to lose trust in Russia,[8] and some believe this has exposed the decline of Russian influence in the region.

6 Relations with Other Countries

(1) Relations with Asian Countries

Russia recognizes that the significance of the Asia-Pacific region is increasing within its multi-pronged foreign policy and considers it strategically important to strengthen its status in the region from the viewpoint of socioeconomic development in Siberia and the Far East, and security. In Asia, in addition to its relations with China, Russia assigns an important role to its Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership with India and continues to pursue wide-ranging military cooperation. Furthermore, Russia is working to strengthen its relations with ASEAN countries and conducted its first-ever joint maritime exercise with such countries in the inshore waters of Indonesia in December 2021. From November to December 2023, vessels from the Russian Pacific Fleet visited eight countries in Southeast Asia and South Asia. With Myanmar in particular, Russia co-hosted an anti-terrorism tabletop exercise within the framework of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) in August 2023 and then conducted the first joint maritime exercise between the two countries, the Myanmar-Russia Maritime Security Exercise (MARUMEX), in November 2023. From October to November 2024, Russia visited five countries from Southeast Asia to East Asia. In November, in particular, Russia conducted ORRUDA, its first-ever bilateral naval exercise with Indonesia, and PASSEX, its first-ever bilateral naval exercise with Thailand. In addition, from February to June 2025, Russia visited nine countries from Southeast Asia to South Asia and conducted bilateral exercises, among other activities.

See Section 8-1-3 (3) (Relations with Russia)

(2) Relations with European Countries

Through the framework of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), Russia has worked with NATO as an equal partner in the areas of common interest, such as by participating in certain decision-making processes. However, following the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, NATO and European countries suspended their practical cooperation with Russia thereafter, including that in the military domain, except for the NRC's ambassador-level meetings. Moreover, with the aggression against Ukraine, the relationship between Russia and European countries is the tensest it has been since the Cold War era. In particular, in September 2025, Poland announced that it had shot down Russian drones that had violated Polish airspace, but the Russian Ministry of Defence denied any intention to attack Polish territory. That same month, NATO announced that it had bolstered its eastern flank defense posture, with the United Kingdom and other NATO members deploying aircraft and naval vessels under the framework of "Eastern Sentry."

8 In June 2024, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan indicated the intention to withdraw from the CSTO. On January 14, 2025, the foreign ministers of Armenia and the United States signed the Armenia-U.S. Strategic Partnership Charter.

See Chapter 2, 3-2 (How NATO Member States and Other Countries Deal with the Situation)

(3) Relations with Middle Eastern and African Countries

In the Foreign Policy Concept published in March 2023, comprehensive mutual cooperation with Iran, total support for Syria, and deepened partnerships with Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other countries are stated definitely. Above all, for Syria, the AFRF has continued to secure the Tartus Naval Base and Khmeimim Air Base in Syria since September 2015 to conduct operations to support the Assad administration. In operations in Syria, Russia has conducted bombings using fighter bombers and long-range bombers, as well as attacks using cruise missiles from surface ships and submarines deployed in the Caspian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. After the collapse of the Assad administration in December 2024, Russian Presidential Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov stated that no final decision has been made regarding Russian military bases in Syria and that this decision will be made based on consultation by the powers that control the country. In addition, in January 2025, President Putin and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian signed a Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership covering a wide range of fields, including security and energy. However, although this treaty includes military-technical cooperation, it does not include any regulations on the provision of military assistance in the event of an armed invasion.

Russia is also increasing its influence in Libya, while at the same time coordinating its interests with Türkiye.

See Section 10-2-2 (1) (China and Russia)

7 Arms Exports

Russia actively promotes the export of arms not only to maintain the defense industrial base and to make economic profit, but also to help promote better foreign policy. Export operations have been exclusively conducted by the Rosoboronexport State Corporation. Currently, Russia has the third largest share of arms exports in the world after the United States and France,[9] exporting fighters, vessels, and surface-to-air missiles to regions including Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. In recent years, Russia has actively tried to sell not only to conventional importers of its products but also to U.S. allies and U.S. friendly countries such as Türkiye. However, the U.S. Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) passed in 2017, and sanctions against Russia from Russia's aggression against Ukraine are seen to be having a severe impact on Russia's defense industry.

See Chapter 4, Section 4 (Trends Concerning Defense Production and Technological Bases)

9 According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Russia had the third largest share of arms exports in the world (11%) after the United States and France between 2019 and 2023.

Commentary

Russia's Military Trends in the Area Surrounding Japan

Russia appears to be reinforcing its nuclear forces even as it continues its aggression against Ukraine. In the area surrounding Japan, Russia is considered to be further focusing on the defense of the area surrounding the Sea of Okhotsk, which is its waters of operation for strategic nuclear-powered submarines.

Regarding strategic nuclear submarines, a new type of Borey A-class SSBN was deployed every year between 2022 and 2024, bringing the current total of Borey/Borey A-class SSBNs to five, and some of the existing nuclear submarines have been modernized and upgraded.

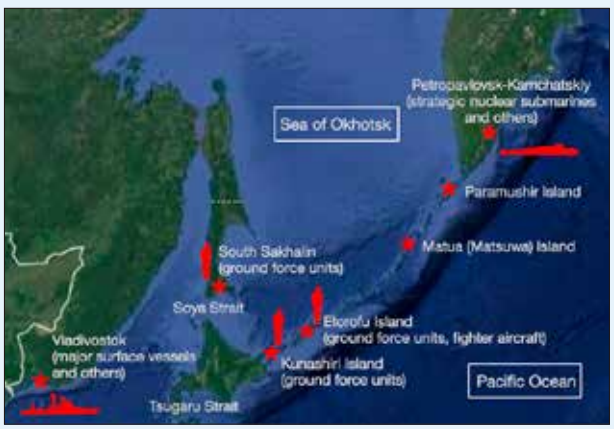
In recent years, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (AFRF) has newly deployed "Bastion" and "Bal" surface-to-ship missile systems and S-400 surface-to-air missile systems in the Kamchatka Peninsula, which is in the vicinity of the Sea of Okhotsk, Russia's waters of operation for nuclear-powered submarines; in the Chishima Islands and South Sakhalin, which are disputed territories; and in Japan's Northern Territories. These moves are thought to be part of Russia's so-called "bastion" strategy, in which it seeks to prevent other countries' militaries from approaching the area around the Sea of Okhotsk, the waters where it operates its strategic nuclear-powered submarines.

In addition, from the perspective of strengthening the "bastion" strategy, the AFRF is considered to be advancing the development and utilization of naval and air forces based in Primorsky Krai and the Kamchatka Peninsula. Specifically, Russia is in the process of upgrading the Pacific Fleet with ships armed with "Kalibr" cruise missiles, which are precisionguided munitions capable of carrying tactical nuclear and conventional warheads. In Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy, it is newly deploying Steregushchiy III class frigates and Yasen M-class submarines, and in Vladivostok, it is newly deploying improved Kilo-class submarines and modernized and upgraded Udaloy-class destroyers, and it is expected to increase the number of these kinds of naval vessels going forward as well. Furthermore, Zircon hypersonic cruise missiles, which were deployed in January 2023, can be equipped on Gorshkov-class missile frigates, as well as on the Yasen M-class nuclear-powered submarine Perm, which was launched in March 2025. It has also been reported that there are plans to deploy naval vessels equipped with these Zircon missiles in the Far East region in future.

These naval and air forces are considered to be utilized on a regular basis to act as a deterrent to the United States, Japan, and others. Increased activity was seen even before the start of the aggression against Ukraine. For example, in 2021 the Pacific Fleet reportedly conducted a large-scale exercise in the central Pacific west of the Hawaiian Islands. In September 2024, it was confirmed that an IL-38 patrol aircraft intruded into Japan's territorial airspace three times in a single day.

Furthermore, in recent years, Russia has further reinforced its military cooperation with China. Specifically, Russia has been conducting joint navigation of naval vessels, joint flights of bombers, and various types of training with China. Regarding the joint navigation of naval vessels, along with a trend toward expanding the sea areas in which these activities take place, diversification in the range of naval activities has been seen, such as the participation of submarines in an August 2025 joint navigation for the first time. Moreover, regarding joint flights of bombers, expansion of the airspace in which the activities take place and an increase in aircraft types other than bombers participating in the activities have been seen. In December 2025, Chinese and Russian bombers flew a long distance from the East China Sea, passing through the airspace between the main island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island, and reaching the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Shikoku for the first time in a joint flight. Moreover, regarding the various trainings, in September 2024 the militaries of China and Russia each participated in exercises organized by the other country and conducted in the same timeframe.

We must watch Russia's military developments in the Indo-Pacific region, including the area surrounding Japan, as well as Russia's increasing naval and air forces and trends in Russia's military cooperation with China, with strong concern.



Deployment of the Russian Military in the Area Surrounding Japan

Perspective

Military Cooperation between Russia, China, and North Korea

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Since February 2022, Russia has continued its intense aggression against Ukraine involving attacking and occupying its territory, which has resulted in countless human rights violations. Despite the economic sanctions imposed on the country, Russia appears to be raising funds for the war effort by switching to new oil and gas export markets, along with increasing taxes and issuing government bonds, which indicates a certain degree of resilience against the sanctions. Moreover, in addition to strengthening the production capabilities of military supplies through prioritizing allocation of resources to the arms industry, it is also focusing on recruiting new contract soldiers and continually sends large quantities of military supplies and personnel to Ukraine. In particular, Russia also receives support from overseas for military supplies. For example, it has been reported that the country produces military supplies using foreign currency and technical resources such as communications devices and sensors obtained through trade with China. In addition, Shahed drones, which it produces using manufacturing technology from Iran, have been deployed on the battlefield. According to the Government of Ukraine, Russia is mass-producing Geran drones, an upgraded version of Shahed drones that use components from China. Russia has also been supplied with artillery shells and ballistic missiles by North Korea, and there are reports that over half the artillery shells used by Russia originate from North Korea. This foreign support is what has enabled Russia to continue its intense aggression.

Meanwhile, it is believed that military aid to Russia does not only benefit the recipient, but also the provider. For example, in cases where Russia uses military technology or different types of weapons on the battlefield, there is a possibility that data on the experience or effectiveness thereof will also be shared with the technology provider. This will surely serve as an opportunity for China to gain insights into the latest tactics. Moreover, North Korean-made ballistic missiles have been used in Russian military operations, and North Korean soldiers have also gained experience in operating drones and conducting electronic warfare. Accordingly, there is a fear that North Korea will improve its operational capabilities based on the lessons learned from these experiences. It is also necessary to consider the possibility that military technology is being transferred from Russia to North Korea through these dealings. It has been reported that Russia may have provided technology for North Korea's air defense systems, surface vessels, submarines, military reconnaissance satellites, and other equipment. Given that military cooperation with North Korea is prohibited by UN Security Council Resolution, the transfer of military technology by Russia could be an extremely valuable opportunity for North Korea to strengthen its military capabilities.

In this way, cooperation between China and Russia, as well as between Russia and North Korea, which came about with the advent of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, not only bolsters Russia's sustained operational capability, but also has the potential to enhance China's operation capabilities through the sharing of tactics and strengthen North Korea's military capabilities, including its nuclear and missile forces. It is vital to continue closely monitoring these developments in cooperation from the additional perspective of their impact on the security of the Indo-Pacific region surrounding Japan.

(Note) This column is an independent analysis from the researcher's academic perspective, and its contents do not represent an official government position.

Section 6 Oceania

1 Australia

1 General Situation

Australia is an island nation that forms a continent solely with its own territory and has the geopolitical characteristics of being located at a certain distance from major powers. Australia is promoting an open, inclusive, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region and is a special strategic partner with Japan, sharing fundamental values and strategic interests.

2 Defense Policies

(1) Defense Strategies

Given the normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and China in the 1970s, Australia had improved its relations with China and continued to assume that there was no immediate or direct threat to Australia. The Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities conducted in 1986 assessed itself as "one of the most secure countries in the world" and indicated that it would receive at least 10-years' warning before any major attack on Australia. This outlook defined Australia's defense policy even after the Cold War.

However, Australia recognized that its strategic environment has been deteriorating more rapidly than anticipated since 2020 due to military modernization in the Indo-Pacific region and intensifying competition between major powers, including the United States and China. Given the situation, Australia released the 2020 Defence Strategic Update to reconsider its defense strategy, stating that Australia's defense plan based on the aforementioned 10-year warning time was no longer appropriate.

The Albanese's Labor Party Government, which was established in May 2022 and began its second term in May 2025, has been developing the National Defence Strategy (NDS) and the Integrated Investment Program (IIP) biennially since April 2024. The NDS2026, released in April 2026, states that the international system is trending away from rules toward the exercise of power, and that Australia's exposure to force projection and military coercion will reach levels not seen since World War II. In addition, while building on the Strategy of Denial[1] adopted by the previous NDS, the updated NDS aims to (1) develop greater self-reliance; (2) prioritize capability acquisition and sustainment plans drawing on lessons learned from Russia's aggression against Ukraine and conflicts in the Middle East; (3) strengthen Australia's sovereign defense industrial base and build stronger, more diverse international industrial partnerships; (4) improve national civil preparedness and national resilience to help shield Australia from regional or global disruption; and (5) increase coordination with regional partners to shape a region governed by rights and rules.

The IIP outlines the priority capability area for investment areas and other specific measures necessary to achieve the capabilities set out in the NDS. It states that investments will be made in areas such as maritime capabilities, long-range strike capabilities, the accelerated introduction of integrated air and missile defense, and the expanded adoption of autonomous and uncrewed systems across the land, maritime, and air domains.

In addition, Australia has been conducting monitoring and surveillance activities against illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean-flagged vessels in waters around Japan since 2018. From late February to mid-March 2026, Royal Australian Navy frigate HMAS Toowoomba conducted monitoring and surveillance activities.

(2) AUKUS Initiatives

In September 2021, then Prime Minister Scott Morrison, along with the leaders of the United States and the United Kingdom, announced the establishment of a new trilateral security cooperation framework, AUKUS, aimed at deepening diplomatic, security and defense cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. Under the announced joint statement, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States will promote the following concrete initiatives: (1) support for Australia to acquire at least eight nuclear-powered submarines[2] and (2) technical cooperation for advanced capabilities (cyber, artificial intelligence (AI), quantum technology, and undersea capabilities).

In April 2022, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States announced in relation to aforementioned (2) that they would deepen their cooperation regarding hypersonics and counter-hypersonic capabilities, electronic warfare, defense innovation and information sharing.

1 According to the National Defence Strategy (NDS) 2024, a Strategy of Denial aims to deter any conflict before it begins, prevent any potential adversary from succeeding in coercing Australia through force, support regional security and prosperity, and uphold a favorable regional strategic balance.

2 Australia had planned to procure 12 conventional submarines (attack-class submarines) from France, but this plan was suspended when it was decided to acquire nuclear-powered submarines within the framework of AUKUS.

In addition, Australia has continued to acquire Tomahawk cruise missiles and stand-off missiles, and in December 2024, the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) announced the successful test firing of a Tomahawk missile from the destroyer HMAS Brisbane.

In March 2023, the leaders of Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States held a summit meeting in the United States and announced that they will deliver conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines for Australia through a three-phase approach, while meeting the commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. In the first phase, the United States and the United Kingdom plan to establish the rotational presence of their nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSN) as early as 2027 at HMAS Stirling, which is on the west coast of Australia, and the RAN will also conduct practical training. The second phase is to acquire up to five U.S. Virginia-class submarines in the early 2030s. In the third phase, AUKUS partners will deliver a trilaterally-developed submarine (SSN-AUKUS) for both Australia and the United Kingdom. They will incorporate the cutting-edge submarine technologies of the United States to the United Kingdom's next-generation design. The two countries intend to build the submarines in their domestic shipyard.

In December 2023, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States held an AUKUS defense ministers' meeting, and, during the meeting, it was announced that: RAN crew members would begin operations in Guam in 2024 to acquire nuclear-powered submarine maintenance skills in support of the Submarine Rotational Force – West (SRF-West), which will be established off the west coast of Australia. The three countries will conduct joint experiments and exercises with uncrewed maritime systems to improve their maritime domain awareness, and all three countries will promote the technological development of quantum sensing to improve undersea positioning capabilities and to accelerate technological development of submarine-based undersea vehicles as part of efforts to further develop the SSN-AUKUS.

In April 2024, an AUKUS defense ministers' joint statement was issued, confirming cooperation in the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS's Pillar I and announcing its consideration of cooperating with Japan under Pillar II, the area of advanced capabilities.

The AUKUS leaders' joint statement and defense ministers' joint statement released in September 2024 announced that AUKUS will cooperate with Japan in the maritime autonomous systems as an initial area of cooperation and is also consulting with Canada, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea (ROK) to identify possibilities for collaboration on advanced capabilities under Pillar II.

In July 2025, the second Trump administration announced that it would undertake a review of the AUKUS initiaive; however, at the Australia-U.S. summit in October, President Trump indicated that it would proceed "full steam ahead." Subsequently, it was reconfirmed that AUKUS would proceed "full steam ahead" at the Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultation (AUSMIN) and AUKUS Defense Ministers' meeting held in December.

See Part IV, Chapter 3, Section 3-1-10 (AUKUS (Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States))



AUKUS Defense Ministers' meeting [U.S. Department of War]

3 Relations with Countries and Regions

(1) Relations with the United States

Australia and the United States have an alliance based on the ANZUS Treaty[3] (security treaty between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America), a mutual defense treaty that underpins Australia's security policy. In response to the spread of communism in East Asia and the descending British influence in the Asia-Pacific after World War II, Australia strengthened its alliance with the United States, mainly possessing U.S.-made high-performance land, sea and air equipment. Australia has dispatched its troops to U.S.-led wars and conflicts, such as the Viet Nam War, the Gulf War and military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Since 1985, the two countries have been regularly convening the Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) to discuss major diplomatic and security issues. In December 2025, AUSMIN was held in the United States, and in a joint fact sheet, the two countries stated that they will commit to bolstering their industrial bases and accelerate existing initiatives to advance security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific Region.

In November 2011, the United States and Australia announced the "Force Posture Initiative," a framework for

3 A trilateral security treaty among Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, which went into effect in 1952. Since 1986, the United States has suspended its obligation to defend New Zealand due to its adoption of a non-nuclear policy. The treaty is thus effective only between Australia and the United States and between Australia and New Zealand.

the rotational deployment of the U.S. Forces to Australia as part of the U.S. rebalance policy during the Obama administration. Since 2012, the U.S. Marine Corps has been deployed on a rotational basis to northern Australia, including Darwin. Additionally, the U.S. Air Force has been deploying B-52 strategic bombers and F-22 fighter jets to Australia as needed to conduct joint exercises and training with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). The United States and Australia have also indicated their intention to deploy the U.S. Navy patrol and reconnaissance aircraft on a rotational basis in Australia in the future.

Since 2005, the U.S. Forces and ADF have biennially conducted the "Talisman Sabre" multilateral joint exercises hosted by the United States and Australia to improve interoperability and strengthen ties among participating countries. According to announcements by the Australian government, 19 countries participated in the "Talisman Sabre 25" multilateral joint exercise from July to August 2025, with parts of the exercise conducted in Papua New Guinea for the first time. During the exercise, Precision Strike Missile (PrSM), a long-range missile which the United States and Australia co-develops, was fired from the ADF's HIMARS. The U.S. Army also deployed its Long-Range Hypersonic Weapon (LRHW) outside of the continental United States for the first time. Furthermore, the U.S. Army announced that it had deployed the ground-launched mid-range missile system, Typhon, and successfully conducted its first live-fire of the SM-6 outside of the continental United States against a maritime target.



PrSM fired from HIMARS [Australian Department of Defence]

(2) Relations with China

China is Australia's largest trading partner, and the two countries have conducted various exchanges in the defense area such as dialogues between the defense authorities, bilateral exercises, and mutual visits of vessels, in addition to exchanges and cooperation in the political areas.

Meanwhile, Australia has been clearly showing its wariness toward China by explicitly conveying its position on China given the military use of the South China Sea and its expansion to Pacific island countries.

The Australian government has been expressing strong concerns over China's reclamation and construction activities in the South China Sea and opposing any unilateral attempt to change the status quo through militarization or coercive actions on disputed features. It has also expressed its intent to continue exercising its rights to freedom of navigation and overflight.

In 2020, Australia, which was under the former Morrison government at the time, suggested the necessity of an independent investigation into the origin of the COVID-19 outbreak in China. China successively imposed trade blockages on Australian beef and other products, leading to a rapid deterioration of Australia-China relations. Subsequently with the change of government in Australia, the two countries resumed diplomatic and security dialogue and removed all trade blockages in December 2024.

Meanwhile, the Australian government has announced that the Chinese military interfered with an Australian ship and aircraft which were conducting monitoring and surveillance activities in response to illicit maritime activities including ship-to-ship transfers by North Korea. In May 2024, a PLA fighter aircraft released flares at a RAN helicopter that was undertaking monitoring and surveillance activities over the Yellow Sea in response to ship-to-ship transfers by North Korea. In addition, according to the Australian government, in February 2025, a PLA fighter aircraft released flares at a RAAF patrol aircraft while it was conducting a routine maritime surveillance patrol. In the same month, Chinese vessels navigated around Australia and conducted a live-fire exercise near the eastern coast of Australia. In October 2025, the Australian government announced that a PLA fighter aircraft released flares at a RAAF patrol aircraft conducting maritime surveillance patrol in the South China Sea. Furthermore, in March 2026, a PLA helicopter closed in on a RAN helicopter, interfering with its flight, while it was conducting monitoring and surveillance activities over the Yellow Sea in response to illicit maritime activities including ship-to-ship transfer by North Korea. The Australian government has expressed serious concerns to the Chinese government, describing the PLA's activities as unsafe and unprofessional interactions, while the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs insisted that the PLA had consistently conducted professional activities in accordance with international law and practice.

(3) Relations with Southeast Asia and Pacific Island Countries

In its 2020 Defence Strategic Update, Australia announced a policy of focusing on the Indo-Pacific region, particularly the adjacent areas from the northeastern Indian Ocean, through maritime and mainland Southeast Asia to Papua New Guinea and the South West Pacific.

Australia has been deepening its relations with Indonesia in the security and defense fields following the signing of the Lombok Treaty, a security cooperation framework, in November 2006 and the elevation of their relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in August 2018.

The two countries regularly hold Foreign and Defense Ministers' Meetings (2+2) and have signed a treaty-level defense cooperation agreement in August 2024. In November 2025, it was announced that the two countries have agreed to the substantial conclusion of a new bilateral treaty on Common Security, which includes provisions to consult each other in the case of adverse challenges to either party or their common security interest and consider measures which might be taken. The treaty was signed in February 2026, and both countries are further bolstering their the bilateral relationship.

With Singapore and Malaysia, Australia carries out regular combined joint exercises in the South China Sea and other areas under the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA; entered into force in 1971) framework, whereby the aforementioned two countries, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand would consult together in the event of any form of armed attack or the threat of such attack against Singapore or Malaysia, for the purpose of deciding what measures should be taken. Australia considers that Singapore is its most advanced defense partner, and that they share Australia's interest in a secure maritime trading environment. In November 2024, based on the Treaty on Military Training and Training Area Development in Australia signed by Australia and Singapore in March 2020, the Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area was expanded and developed. Furthermore, in October 2025, the two countries signed the "Memorandum of Understanding concerning Enhanced Defence Cooperation," which included mutual enhanced access to training facilities and strengthened cooperation in the cyber domain.

Regarding Malaysia, Australia stations the ADF in Royal Malaysian Air Force Base Butterworth and contributes to maintaining regional security and stability through patrol activities in the South China Sea and the northern Indian Ocean.

Australia has been strengthening its defense relationship with the Philippines, primarily through support for building counter-terrorism capabilities and at the Australia-Philippines defense ministers' meeting in February 2023, it was concurred that this meeting would be held annually from the following year. According to the release by the Australian Department of Defence, Australia has been participating in the Balikatan multilateral joint exercise hosted by the United States and the Philippines since 2014, and in August 2023 it conducted its first Australian-Philippines amphibious exercise, Exercise Alon, which included scenario training for reclaiming enemy-captured island. Additionally, in November the same year, ADF and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) conducted Maritime Cooperative Activity in the waters and airspace around the Philippines for the first time. In July 2025, the Philippines participated in the "Talisman Sabre" multilateral joint exercises hosted by the United States and Australia for the first time, and in August, Australia and Philippines conducted Australian-Philippines amphibious exercise, Exercise Alon for the second time. In the same month, the Australia-Philippines Defense Ministers' Meeting was held, during which the ministers agreed to seek concluding a new defense cooperation agreement in 2026, which would include the construction of military infrastructure in the Philippines undertaken by the ADF.

Regarding Pacific Island countries, the Albanese Government criticized the former Morrison Government for failing to intervene in the signing of a framework agreement between Solomon Islands and China on security cooperation in April 2022 and announced a basic policy to strengthen engagement with Pacific Island countries. Based on this policy, the government announced the establishment of Australia-Pacific Defence School to provide training programs for members of defense and security forces from Pacific Island nations and the establishment of a framework to support the development of climate-resilient infrastructure for these countries for which climate change is a critical issue. Furthermore, Australia has concluded a security agreement with Papua New Guinea and the Falepili[4] Union Treaty with Tuvalu in 2023, as well as the signing of a treaty on economic and security with Nauru in 2024. In October 2025, Australia and Papua New Guinea signed the Pukpuk[5] Treaty, which serves as a mutual defense treaty, and agreed to upgrade their relationship to that of an alliance. Through such initiatives, Australia has been demonstrating its active engagement with Pacific Island countries.

Furthermore, Australia plays a leading role in assisting these countries in fields such as maintaining public security, coping with natural disasters, and maritime patrols. In the maritime patrol field, Australia still regularly deploys ADF assets to the South Pacific to assist with patrol activities. It has also delivered Pacific Island countries with 22 Guardian-class Patrol Boats as of September 2025.

See 2 (New Zealand), 7 (Southeast Asia)

4 "Falepili" means good neighborliness and mutual respect in Tuvaluan.
5 "Pukpuk" means crocodile in the native language.

2 New Zealand

New Zealand is located in the Indo-Pacific Region and is an important strategic cooperative partner that shares fundamental values with Japan.

In July 2022, the Ministry of Defence announced that the government would conduct a Defence Policy Review to formulate the country's long-term defense strategy based on issues such as the growing impacts of climate change and intensifying strategic and geopolitical competition, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

In August 2023, the New Zealand government announced the country's first-ever five-year security policy guidelines, New Zealand's National Security Strategy 2023-2028 (NSS), analyzing the security challenges it faces. The country also announced the Defence Policy and Strategy Statement (DPSS), which specifies the country's objectives and defense strategy under its defense policy as the first phase of the Defence Policy Review, as well as the Future Force Design Principles (FFDP), which guides the New Zealand Defence Force's (NZDF) investment plans for the next 15 years.

In the DPSS, it was noted that the heightened competition and tensions in the disputed areas of the Indo-Pacific region pose potentially significant impact for New Zealand's interests and that the impact of climate change will exacerbate existing fragilities within Pacific Island countries and across the region which in turn could increase economic and governance risks. On China, New Zealand observed that the country is using all its instruments of national power in ways that can pose challenges to existing international rules and norms. Also, it is assessed that China continues to invest heavily in growing and modernizing its military, and is increasingly able to project its military and paramilitary force beyond its immediate region, including across the wider Indo-Pacific.

In light of this assessment, New Zealand indicated that the Defence Forces would shift its focus to more actively shaping the country's security environment, rather than responding to incidents as they happen. Regarding climate change, New Zealand affirmed its commitment to continuing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) activities for Pacific Island countries in cooperation with like-minded countries and others.

In April of 2025, the New Zealand government released the Defence Capability Plan (DCP), a plan such as for procurement and equipment acquisition, designed with a 15-year horizon in mind. Under the plan, the defense spending will be lifted to more than 2% of its GDP in the next eight years.

In terms of foreign policy as well, the coalition government inaugurated in November 2023, announced a foreign policy reset. In addition, to achieve a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, the government has called for the enhancement of security and defense capabilities recognizing the close interdependence between economic prosperity and regional stability.

As for diplomatic relations, New Zealand has maintained close relationships with the United States and Australia and sees Australia as its only formal defense ally.

In addition, New Zealand has conducted monitoring and surveillance activities in waters around Japan in response to illicit maritime activities including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean-flagged vessels since 2018. From late March to mid-April 2026, Royal New Zealand Air Force patrol aircraft P-8A conducted monitoring and surveillance activities.

3 Pacific Island Countries

The Pacific Island countries, a collective term for island nations and regions located in the Pacific Ocean, are important to Japan for their abundant marine resources as they possess vast exclusive economic zones and serve as transport routes for energy resources.

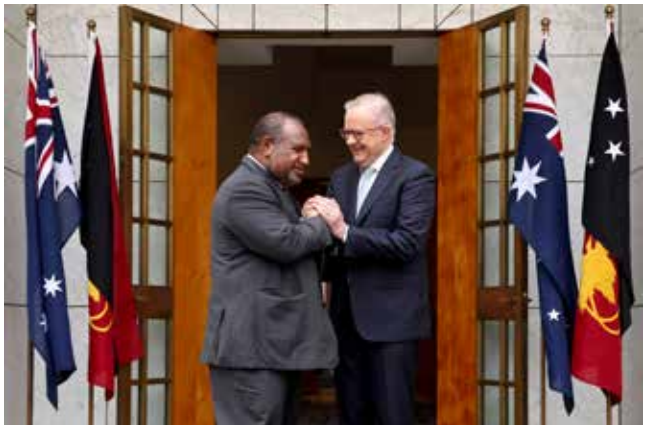
Pacific Island countries face challenges regarding their small size and land distribution, distance from major international market, and the vulnerabilities to natural disasters and climate change.

In addition, the number of Pacific Island countries with their own military forces is limited to just three: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga.

Given these circumstances, these countries consider climate change to be the single greatest threat to their security and sees the loss of national territory due to rising sea levels and the increasing scale of natural disasters as the matter of serious concern.

Traditionally, these countries have deep relationships with Australia, France, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. However, China's increasingly active approach in recent years has made geopolitical competition between major powers become even more prominent. For example, in April 2022, China concluded an agreement on security cooperation with the Solomon Islands that reportedly includes provision that allows deployment of Chinese police and military to the island, also allowing the port call and replenishment of Chinese vessels. Meanwhile, in May 2023, the United States and Papua New Guinea signed a Defense Cooperation Agreement that enables the U.S. military to access ports and airports in the Papua New Guinea. Furthermore, amid China's effort to expand its influence through large-scale infrastructure development and deployment of hospital ships, the United States is striving to maintain and enhance its military presence in the region. Australia has also been actively expanding its regional presence, notably through substantial increase in its budget for supporting Pacific Island

countries. In 2023, it concluded the security agreement with Papua New Guinea and the Falepili Union Treaty with Tuvalu and signed the Nauru-Australia Treaty in 2024. In October 2025, Australia and Papua New Guinea signed the Pukpuk Treaty, which serves as a mutual defense treaty, and agreed to upgrade their relationship to that of an alliance. Furthermore, in December 2025, the three countries of Australia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea held their inaugural Trilateral Defence Minister's Meeting, and agreed to hold it annually from 2026 onward. The growing competition for engagement in the region, primarily among the United States, China, and Australia, has drawn great attention.



Signing of the Australia-Papua New Guinea mutual defense treaty [AFP-Jiji]

Section 7 Southeast Asia

1 General Situation

Southeast Asia is the center of the Indo-Pacific region, located at the intersection of the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean and occupies a strategic position for traffic, linking the Pacific and the Indian Oceans, such as the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea. Therefore, it is an important region for Japan, which relies on maritime transport for many of the supplies needed for economic activities and the lives of the Japanese people.

Meanwhile, this region still has destabilizing factors, including the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, ethnic minority issues, disputes over land borders, and separatist and independence movements. Moreover, there have also been problems with Islamic extremist groups and piracy incidents obstructing the safe passage of ships. In order to cope with these issues, the countries in Southeast Asia are working to build military forces for national defense and the maintenance of domestic public security, as well as for addressing new security issues that include counterterrorism and counter-piracy. Each country is also pursuing cooperation respectively with countries such as the United States, China, Russia, and Australia to this end. In recent years, against the backdrop of factors such as economic growth, they have increased their defense expenditure and advanced the modernization of their militaries and strengthening of their maritime law enforcement capabilities.

2 Security and Defense Policies of Each Country

1 Brunei

In May 2021, Brunei released its first defense white paper in 10 years since 2011, outlining its national defense guidelines in anticipation of the expected security environment through 2035. In this defense white paper, Brunei mentioned issues related to maritime security for the first time, recognizing the growing importance of Brunei's maritime security, including the increasing necessity of security in territorial waters and the internal security as well as concerns regarding tensions in the South China Sea and the militarization of maritime features.

2 Cambodia

In 2022, Cambodia released its first defense white paper in 16 years since 2006, identifying the following key challenges in its national defense policy: modernizing equipment, developing military infrastructure, enhancing cyber security capabilities, etc.

With regards to Cambodia's Ream Naval Base, located in southwestern Cambodia, the possibility of China's exclusive use of a portion of the base has been pointed out. In June 2021, Cambodia's Minister of National Defence acknowledged that China had contributed to the development of the base. However, he stated that access to the base facilities was not limited to China alone. Amid these circumstances, in December 2023, two Chinese naval vessels reportedly entered the Ream Naval Base to conduct "training" for the Royal Cambodian Navy and participated in the bilateral exercise "Golden Dragon 2024" in May 2024. Although the vessels are replaced sometimes, Chinese naval vessels are believed to be permanently anchored there. In April 2025, an inauguration ceremony was held to commemorate the completion of upgrade work at the naval base and the establishment of the "Cambodia-China Joint Logistics and Training Center" followed by the bilateral exercise Golden Dragon 2025 in May. The Cambodian Prime Minister has stated that the establishment of foreign military bases in Cambodia is against its Constitution and it welcomes all friendly countries. Naval vessels from Japan and Viet Nam have made port calls at the naval base following the upgrade. In January 2026, a U.S. Navy littoral combat ship (LCS) has also made a port call. In April 2026, one Chinese naval vessel was provided to Cambodia, and it has been suggested that another vessel may be provided in the future. Further movements pertaining to the Ream Naval Base continues to draw attention.

From May 2025, military clashes have occurred in the vicinity of the un-demarcated border between Cambodia and Thailand, escalating tensions between the two countries. In July of the same year, with the mediation of Malaysia (then the Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)), the United States, and other countries, the two countries agreed on an immediate ceasefire and a mechanism for implementing the ceasefire. Moreover, in October, the two countries signed a Joint Declaration on the border conflict. However, subsequently, clashes continued to occur, resulting in numerous casualties, refugees, and damage to civilian facilities in both countries. In December, it was announced that an immediate ceasefire had been agreed once again. Tensions remain high near the border, so attention will be focused on developments going forward.

3 Indonesia

As part of its military modernization plan, Indonesia aims to achieve the Optimum Essential Force (OEF), accordingly announcing an increase in defense expenditure as well as a policy to bolster its deployment of assets to the Natuna Islands, the South China Sea, and other locations. It has been reported that Indonesia has deployed an integrated unit, air squadron, etc. to the Natuna Islands and that the transfer of its naval combat command headquarters to Natuna is almost completed and is now capable of operating fighter jets, surface vessels, and submarines in the area.

In addition, Indonesia pursues non-aligned and omnidirectional diplomacy, and it conducted exercises with Russia, Australia, and China after the inauguration of the Prabowo administration in October 2024.

With the United States, Indonesia is strengthening its cooperative relationship in such fields as military education and training and military equipment procurement. In addition, Indonesia has carried out bilateral training including army exercise Garuda Shield, naval exercise Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT)[1] and counter terrorism exercise Southeast Asia Cooperation Against Terrorism (SEACAT)[2] with the United States. Since 2022, the Super Garuda Shield, a multilateral exercise expanding both the military services and participating countries of the original Garuda Shield, has been conducted.

Although Indonesia does not recognize the "nine-dash line" claimed by China, it has enhanced its patrol activities in the area keeping in mind the fact that the "nine-dash line" overlaps with part of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) claimed by Indonesia in the vicinity of the Natuna Islands. Meanwhile, in November 2024, President Prabowo made his first overseas visit to China, and following a summit meeting, a joint statement was released announcing that they had reached important common understanding on joint development in areas of overlapping claims. Future developments are to draw attention. Furthermore, in April 2025, Indonesia held its first foreign and defense ministerial consultations ("2+2") with China. In addition, President Prabowo participated in the military parade for 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 of the same year, followed by the meeting with President Xi. The government of Indonesia initially announced that the visit had been cancelled due to the deteriorating domestic situation in Indonesia, but subsequently announced that Indonesia has decided to visit China, in light of a special request from China and improvement of the domestic situation.

Furthermore, Indonesia is advocating an omnidirectional diplomacy and is strengthening relations with other neighboring countries. In August of the same year, Indonesia held its ninth foreign and defense ministerial consultations ("2+2") with Australia. In addition, the two countries announced that they had agreed to the substantive conclusion of a new security treaty including provisions for undertaking consultation in the case of a security threat and consideration of measures if appropriate, signing the treaty in February 2026. Furthermore, in December 2025, the three countries of Australia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea held their inaugural trilateral defense ministerial meeting, and agreed to hold it annually from 2026 onward.

4 Laos

Under the defense policy released in 2013, Laos adopted self-defense as the core of its approach and stated its intention to strengthen the integration of national defense with politics, diplomacy, and economics, while promoting peace, friendship, and collaboration at both the global and regional levels. Furthermore, its basic policy is good neighborly and omnidirectional diplomacy based on the five principles of peace: mutual respect for territory and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, and it maintains good relationships with ASEAN member states, China, Russia, and others. In September 2025, President Thongloun Sisoulith participated in the military parade for 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," and in October of the same year, he visited North Korea on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Korean Workers' Party, and met with Chairman Kim.

Although there was a military confrontation between Laos and Cambodia over an un-demarcated border area in 2019, there have been no other military conflicts between Laos and neighboring countries ever since.

5 Malaysia

Malaysia's first defense white paper, which was published in December 2019, finds its potential to serve as a bridge between the vast Pacific and Indian Oceans as the country is divided in two territories—Peninsular Malaysia, and Sabah and Sarawak, on the island of Borneo—located between the two oceans. The white paper also recognizes that, while Malaysia's strategic location and natural resources are blessing ones, they also pose a security challenge to itself. Given these attributes, Malaysia has historically been affected

1 A general term that refers to a series of bilateral naval exercises that the United States conducts with Bangladesh and other Southeast Asian nations.
2 Refers to counter-terrorism combined exercises that the United States conducts with Southeast Asian nations.

by the political dynamics of major powers, and even today, Malaysia sees in its defense white paper that uncertain U.S.-China relationship is the most important strategic challenge for Malaysia.

In response to the continued presence of Chinese vessels near the South Luconia Shoals, over which Malaysia and China are disputing sovereignty, the country has expressed its determination to defend its sovereignty through around-the-clock monitoring by its navy and maritime law enforcement agencies.

Malaysia and the United States conduct joint exercises, such as "CARAT" and "SEACAT," and have been promoting military cooperation including capacity building in the maritime security field.

Malaysia also prioritizes defense relations based on the Five Power Defence Arrangements[3] (FPDA), and the headquarters of the Integrated Area Defence System (IADS), which coordinates the activities of the FPDA, is based at the Royal Malaysian Air Force Butterworth Air Base.

6 Myanmar

Myanmar's armed forces had control over the government following the collapse of the socialist regime in 1988. However, due to an economic stagnation caused by the economic sanctions imposed by the West, the transition to civilian rule was completed based on a road map to democracy.

Myanmar's parliamentary election was conducted in November 2020, and the National League for Democracy (NLD) secured an overwhelming single majority in both houses with the number of seats significantly higher than the previous election. However, in February 2021, then State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and her party's senior members were detained by Myanmar's military, which was claiming election fraud, and the armed forces declared a state of emergency to carry out a coup d'état, and power was handed over to the commander-in-chief. The State Administration Council (SAC) chaired by Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar Armed Forces Min Aung Hlaing was formed by the Armed Force. In addition, in August of the same year, the SAC announced the establishment of a "provisional government" with the Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar Armed Forces as the "provisional prime minister."

However, in April of the same year, although the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), which was established primarily by NLD members elected during the 2020 general election, declared the establishment of the National Unity Government (NUG), the Armed Forces designated them and other related entities as terrorist organizations.

At the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting held in April 2021 with the attendance of Myanmar military's commander, a "Five-Point Consensus"[4] was announced, recognizing ASEAN's proactive and constructive role in promoting a peaceful resolution. A Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar was appointed by the ASEAN Chair, and ASEAN is working to support a resolution, including the timely implementation of the "Five-Point Consensus."

In late March of 2025, a major earthquake of magnitude 7.7 struck central Myanmar, and in response, various Asian countries, including the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), as well as other countries and international organizations participated in the support operations. Although Myanmar's military has announced a temporary ceasefire with those against the Armed Force given the relief and reconstruction efforts, persistent airstrikes in rural areas have been reported.

Furthermore, from the end of December 2025 to the end of January 2026, the first general elections since the February 2021 coup d'état were held in three phases, and in April 2026, the Myanmar's Assembly of the Union announced the election of Min Aung Hlaing as President. In the same month, Win Myint, who had served as President under the NLD administration and had been imprisoned for a long period, was released as part of an amnesty. It was also announced that Aung San Suu Kyi's place of confinement for the remainder of her sentence had been changed from a prison to a designated residence. Meanwhile, the situation in Myanmar continues to be uncertain, and future developments will continue to be closely watched, including efforts toward political progress such as the further release of detainees including Aung San Suu Kyi, and sincere dialogue among the parties involved.

Myanmar has maintained a good relationship with China since the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1950 and the country is regarded as a major supplier of equipment. Myanmar has also received Chinese aid for pipeline construction and the development of Kyaukpyu Port. In January 2020, President Xi became the first Chinese leader to visit Myanmar in 19 years and affirmed China's policy of promoting economic cooperation through the "Belt and Road" Initiative (BRI). Furthermore, in September 2025, Myanmar's Commander-in-Chief participated in the military parade for 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."

Myanmar maintains a cooperative relationship with Russia in the military field since the period of the past military regime, and Russia was a destination for students from Myanmar and

3 Entered into effect in 1971. This agreement states that Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom will discuss what response should be adopted in the event of an aggression toward or a threat of an attack on Malaysia or Singapore. The five countries carry out various exercises based on these arrangements.

4 This was announced at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting held in April 2021 and consists of five items: (1) there shall be immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar; (2) constructive dialogue among all parties concerned shall commence; (3) a special envoy of the ASEAN Chair shall facilitate mediation of the dialogue process; (4) ASEAN shall provide humanitarian assistance through the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Center); and (5) the special envoy of the ASEAN Chair shall visit Myanmar to meet with all parties concerned.

a supplier of major defense equipment.

The Commander-in-Chief visited Moscow in March 2025, held a meeting with President Putin, and confirmed cooperation in development and investment, including nuclear power plants. In addition, in May of the same year, he participated in the military parade to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the war victory over Germany. Moreover, the Commander-in-Chief visited Russia again in September of the same year and held a meeting with President Putin.

Cooperative relations with North Korea, including weapons trades, were maintained under Myanmar's military regime in the past. Following the transition to democracy, although Myanmar denied its military ties to North Korea, the "Final Report of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee" in March 2018 pointed out that the country received a ballistic missile system and other weapons from North Korea.

7 The Philippines

In the National Security Policy 2023-2028 (NSP) released in August 2023, it identifies that the South China Sea issue remains a primary national interest of the Philippines, all the while strengthening cooperation with allies and partner countries and developing a comprehensive national security policy encompassing a wide range of areas including the economy, energy, and climate change.

The Philippines, with a historically close relationship with the United States, has maintained a cooperative relationship with the United States under the Mutual Defense Treaty and Military Assistance Agreement, even after the withdrawal of the U.S. Forces in 1992.

In February 1998, the two countries signed a Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), which prescribed the legal status of U.S. military personnel when the U.S. Forces conducts combined military exercises or other related activities in the Philippines.

Furthermore, in April 2014, the two countries signed the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), which allows enhanced cooperation in disaster relief, rotational deployment of the U.S. Forces, construction and improvement of agreed locations in the Philippines by the United States, and U.S. Forces' prepositioning of equipment and others. In March 2016, under EDCA, the two countries agreed on designating five bases of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) as sites for the rotational deployment of the U.S. Forces.

Since President Marcos took office in June 2022, the Philippines has further strengthened its cooperation with the United States. In February 2023, the U.S. and the Philippine defense ministers jointly announced the designation of four new bases for the EDCA. These four bases consist of three in northern Luzon Island near Taiwan and one on Palawan Island facing the South China Sea. Furthermore, in May 2023, the U.S.-Philippines Bilateral Defense Guidelines were adopted and released for the first time, which serve as a roadmap of modernization of alliance cooperation and deepening interoperability between the United States and the Philippines.

Moreover, in September 2023, a U.S.-Philippines joint navigation in the South China Sea was held under the Marcos administration, followed by the Maritime Cooperation Activity (MCA) in seas and air space surrounding the Philippines, including the South China Sea in November of the same year. Furthermore, the U.S. Army's ground-launched, mid-range missile system, Typhon, has been deployed in the Philippines since April 2024. Also, in addition to the aforementioned Typhon, during the multilateral joint exercise Balikatan 25, conducted from early April to early May 2025, hosted by the United States and the Philippines, the U.S. Marine Corps' Navy-Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System (NMESIS) and the Marine Air Defense Integrated System (MADIS) were deployed in the Philippines. Moreover, in the Balikatan 26 conducted from late April to early May 2026, the U.S. Marine Corps deployed the NMESIS and the MADIS, following on from the previous year, and the U.S. Army launched a Tomahawk cruise missile from the Typhon.

Furthermore, at the U.S.-Philippines defense ministers' meeting held in October 2025, the establishment of the joint U.S.-Philippines "Task Force-Philippines," a task force which will increase operational cooperation and enhance interoperability particularly in the South China Sea, was announced.

The Philippines and China have competing claims over the sovereignty in the Spratly Islands and Scarborough Shoal of the South China Sea. In January 2013, to seek a resolution under international law, the Philippines started arbitral tribunal proceedings pursuant to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) against China. In July 2016, the final award was rendered, accepting nearly all of the Philippines' submissions. The government of the Philippines released a statement that it welcomed the Philippines-China arbitration award and strongly affirmed its respect for the decision, while China stated that it would not comply with this decision.

In January 2023, President Marcos met with President Xi Jinping. They agreed to appropriately manage the differences between the two countries regarding the South China Sea issue through peaceful means, and they also agreed to establish a direct communication mechanism between the diplomatic authorities of the two countries. However, since then, there have been frequent reports of obstructive activities by China Coast Guard vessels and other vessels against Philippine vessels in areas such as the Spratly Islands.

In particular, the Philippine government announced that in June 2024, a Philippine supply ship was obstructed by China Coast Guard vessels and others through dangerous maneuvers such as collisions and firing of water cannons near the Second Thomas Shoal, in the Spratly Islands, where

the Philippine warship Sierra Madre was stranded. According to the Philippine government, the Philippine supply ship was attempting to replenish the supplies of the stranded warship and the action by the China Coast Guard resulted in injuries to the Philippine personnel onboard and damage to the Philippine vessel. In response, President Marcos condemned the action by the China Coast Guard and the maritime militia against the vessels and personnel, pointing out that it was provocative and a clear violation of international law. The United States has reiterated that the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty extends to both countries' armed forces, public vessels, and aircraft of either country—including those of its coast guard—anywhere in the Pacific to include the South China Sea.

In July 2024, the Philippine and Chinese governments announced that they had reached a "provisional agreement" concerning rotation and resupply missions to Sierra Madre. Nevertheless, the tension between the two countries in the South China Sea remains persistent, and several incidents occurred in 2025 as well that mainly resulted in injuries to the Philippine personnel onboard and damage to the Philippine vessel.

In November 2024, the Philippines announced it had signed a domestic law aimed at defining its territorial waters and EEZ in accordance with international law. China condemned this as a serious infringement on its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights. In the same month, China established baselines for its territorial sea adjacent to Scarborough Shoal and published "standard names" for the features of the South China Sea. Moreover, in September 2025, China announced that it had designated a part of the Scarborough Shoal a "national nature reserve" and in response to this the Philippines and the United States issued statements calling for China to abide by the July 2016 Philippines-China arbitration award.

See Section 11-2-1 (Trends Related to the "Principle of the Freedom of the High Seas," etc.)



A China Coast Guard vessel approaching a Philippine vessel while firing water cannons [Philippine Coast Guard]

8 Singapore

Singapore highly prioritizes its national defense, with defense spending accounting for about 3% of its GDP. In October 2022, the Digital and Intelligence Service was established as the fourth service of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), integrating existing command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, and cyber capabilities.

In addition, Singapore emphasizes the importance of cooperative relationships with ASEAN and the FPDA, and has concluded defense cooperation agreements with countries within and outside the region.

With the aim of contributing to peace and stability in the region, Singapore supports the United States' presence in the Asia-Pacific. Since signing the 1990 Memorandum of Understanding (November 1990), Singapore has been allowing the United States to use military facilities in the country. In addition to port calls to Changi Naval Base by U.S. aircraft carriers, the rotational deployment of littoral combat ships (LCSs) began in 2013. Since 2015, the U.S. P-8 patrol aircraft are regularly deployed. In addition, Singapore conducts combined exercises with the United States, such as CARAT and SEACAT.

Singapore has strong economic ties with China. Both countries also conduct joint naval exercises. In October 2019, the two countries signed the revised Agreement on Defence Exchanges and Security Cooperation (ADESC), which formalized existing defense cooperation, including regularization of dialogue and exercises. Meanwhile, Singapore's position differs from China's in some areas such as the South China Sea, where Singapore has taken note of a resolution based on the Philippines-China arbitration award and it also reportedly has military relations with Taiwan.

In March 2020, Singapore and Australia signed the "Treaty on Military Training and Training Area Development" in Australia. As part of this treaty, the expansion and development of the Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area were completed in November 2024. Moreover, in October 2025, they signed an MOU on Enhanced Defence Cooperation, including enhanced access to each other's training facilities and enhanced cooperation in the cyber domain.

9 Thailand

Thailand's defense policy includes: strengthening defense cooperation through ASEAN, international organizations, and other entities; defense that makes comprehensive use of political, economic, and other national strengths; and effective defense aimed at increasing the readiness of the Royal Thai Armed Forces (RTAF) and developing the defense industry.

In the defense white paper released in 2023, Thailand identified cyber and space operations as capabilities that needed to be enhanced for the future national defense. In

October 2024, it reportedly established a dedicated cyber-command unit, reorganized existing cyber units within the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and created an institution for training cyber workforce. In addition, in terms of the space domain, Thailand plans to change the name of the Royal Thai Air Force to the "Royal Thai Air and Space Force."

Under its flexible omnidirectional diplomatic policy, Thailand pursues cooperation with other Southeast Asian countries and coordination with major countries.

In particular, Thailand has an alliance with the United States based on the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty (Manila Treaty) (effective from February 1955), and the U.S. military has access to the Thai military's U-Tapao Royal Thai Navy Airfield. Thailand has been conducting the U.S.-Thailand combined exercise "Cobra Gold" since 1982, which is currently one of the largest multilateral joint exercises in Southeast Asia. In addition, Thailand and the United States have continued to participate in joint exercises such as CARAT, involving the U.S. and Thai navies and others, and the counter-piracy and trafficking exercise SEACAT.

Thailand and China have conducted joint training such as Blue Strike between their navies and Falcon Strike between their air forces.

From May 2025, military clashes have occurred in the vicinity of the un-demarcated border between Cambodia and Thailand, escalating tensions between the two countries. In July of the same year, with the mediation of Malaysia (then the ASEAN Chair), the United States, and other countries, the two countries agreed on an immediate ceasefire and a mechanism for implementing the ceasefire. Moreover, in October, they signed a Joint Declaration on the border conflict. However, subsequently, clashes continued to occur, resulting in numerous casualties, refugees, and damage to civilian facilities in the both countries. In December, it was announced that an immediate ceasefire had been agreed once again. However, tensions remain high near the border, and efforts toward the development continues to draw attention.



Timor-Leste officially joins ASEAN [ASEAN]

10 Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste officially became the 11th ASEAN member state in October 2025. In its Strategic Development Plan (SDP) announced in 2011, Timor-Leste adopted a defense strategy with diplomacy and deterrence capabilities as the main means of preventing and resolving conflicts. In addition, it stated that it was necessary to have highly flexible units enabling the military to function in multiple dimensions and multiple domains, and set the goal of building a military possessing capabilities enabling it to execute multiple military missions simultaneously by 2030.

11 Viet Nam

Based on its viewpoint that the sea is closely associated with the national construction and defense, Viet Nam has established the objective of becoming a strong marine country, particularly prioritizing the modernization of its military forces and law enforcement forces at sea as well as ensuring the capability for maritime domain awareness, maritime independence, sovereign rights, jurisdiction and national interests at sea. Furthermore, Viet Nam deploys its omnidirectional diplomatic policy and intends to actively participate in international and regional cooperation in order to build friendly relations with every nation. The National Assembly held in April 2026 gave approval for the General Secretary of the Communist Party To Lam, to concurrently serve as President.

Viet Nam and the United States have strengthened their military relations in recent years. This has taken such forms as joint training with the U.S. Navy and port calls by U.S. Navy vessels in Viet Nam. In 2023, during then U.S. President Biden's first visit to Viet Nam as president, he met with then President Thưởng and agreed to upgrade the bilateral relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Viet Nam and Russia have been strengthening cooperation in the area of national defense and actively engaging in high-level government exchanges. In May 2025, General Secretary of the Communist Party To Lam participated in Russia's military parade to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the war victory over Germany. The Viet Nam military also participated in the parade, albeit on a small scale. Moreover, in a summit meeting held after the parade, the two countries declared their determination to advance their comprehensive strategic partnership to a new level.

See Section 5-5-6 (1) (Relations with Asian Countries)

Viet Nam has been actively engaging in high-level government exchanges with China under their comprehensive strategic cooperation partnership. In April 2025, President Xi visited Viet Nam and met with General Secretary of the Communist Party To Lam. In addition, then

President Luong Cuong participated in the military parade for 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 of the same year. Viet Nam and China held their first Ministerial-level Strategic Dialogue between their foreign affairs, national defense and public security ministers ("3+3") in March 2026. Furthermore, in April of the same year, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam and State President To Lam visited China, where the two countries signed cooperation documents covering areas including economic and diplomatic cooperation.

However, there are conflicting claims by China and Viet Nam over territorial issues in the South China Sea. The defense white paper published in November 2019 demonstrates an acknowledgement that Viet Nam and China need to resolve with special precaution, avoiding negative impacts on general peace, friendship, and cooperation for development between the two countries. As such, the white paper recognizes that the two countries should continue negotiations and consultations to find peaceful solutions based on international law. On the other hand, Viet Nam has accelerated and expanded landfill work on features under its de facto control, and it has been pointed out that as of March 2025, the scale of these reclamation activities was equivalent in area to approximately 70% of the artificial islands reclaimed by China in the Spratly Islands.[5]

Moreover, Viet Nam has been strengthening its relations with North Korea. In October 2025, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Korean Workers' Party, General Secretary of the Communist Party To Lam visited North Korea for the first time in 18 years as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Viet Nam and participated in the military parade. Furthermore, it is reported that he met with Chairman Kim and signed a cooperation agreement, including a Letter of Intent (LOI) about cooperation in the area of defense.

See Section 11-2-1 (Trends Related to the "Principle of the Freedom of the High Seas," etc.)

3 Intra- and Extra-Regional Cooperation

ASEAN serves as a framework for regional multilateral security and has made effort to improve the security environment in the region and promote confidence-building by holding venues for dialogue on security such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM).

In September 2023, ASEAN held its first maritime exercise on its own in the waters surrounding Indonesia, including the North Natuna Sea.

In addition, ASEAN attaches importance to expanding its relations with countries outside of the region. It holds the ADMM-Plus, a platform that adds eight non-ASEAN countries including Japan to ADMM. Moreover, ASEAN is conducting joint maritime exercises with major powers such as the United States, China, Russia, and India, and in December 2025, it conducted the ASEAN-U.S. Maritime Exercise for the second time since 2019.

In addition, ASEAN and China have continued talks to discuss the formulation of the Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (COC). In July 2019, China announced at the ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting that they had completed the first reading of COC's Single Draft Negotiating Text. Subsequently, a second reading was initiated. At the August 2021 ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, it was noted that a provisional agreement on the Preamble had been reached. Moreover, at the ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July 2023, the Guidelines for Accelerating the Early Conclusion of an Effective and Substantive COC were adopted. The third reading of the guidelines began in October of the same year, and the completion of the third reading was declared in the Press Statement by the Chair of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat in January 2025. President Marcos of the Philippines, who is serving as the ASEAN Chair in 2026, has shown a willingness to conclude the COC in an accelerated manner.

Furthermore, regarding the situation between Cambodia and Thailand, where tensions have escalated since 2025, ASEAN has been making efforts to de-escalate tensions, including by holding the special foreign ministers' meetings. After May of the same year, when military clashes broke out between the two countries due to border issues, Cambodia and Thailand reached an agreement for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in July with mediation from then ASEAN Chair Malaysia, the United States, and other countries. Moreover, in August, an agreement was reached on a mechanism for implementing the ceasefire agreement, including the establishment of an ASEAN Observer Team. In October, in the presence of the leaders of the United States and Malaysia, a Joint Declaration on the border conflict was signed by Cambodia and Thailand. However, clashes continued to occur after that, and in December it was announced that an immediate ceasefire had been agreed once again. However, tensions remain high near the border, and efforts toward the normalization of relations between the two countries, including the activities by the ASEAN Observer Team, continue to draw attention.

5 According to the August 2025 report "No Islet Left Behind: Vietnam Reclaims Land at Every Remaining Spratly Outpost" by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

Section 8 South Asia

1 India

1 General Situation

India is the world's largest democratic country. It has achieved rapid economic growth in recent years and has significant influence in the South Asian region. Also, it is located in the middle of the Indian Ocean, which is of strategic and geopolitical importance. India has also increased its presence as a geopolitical player, while the international community in return has high expectations for the country's role.

India has traditionally aimed at nonaligned and omnidirectional diplomacy while emphasizing the preserving of strategic autonomy. The Modi administration has maintained a neighborhood first policy, which emphasizes strengthening relations with South Asian countries, while expanding the focus of strengthening India's external relations to the Indo-Pacific region in accordance with the "Act East" policy. In addition, the administration has carried out proactive foreign policy, prioritizing India's relations with the United States, Russia, and Europe as well as the Middle East and Africa.

On the other hand, India has non-demarcated border issues with China and Pakistan. There are also concerns about the activities of ultra-leftists and secession and independence movements, as well as activities of Islamic extremists. Accordingly, defending its land borders and tackling the threat of domestic terrorism are major concerns for India. In addition, in recent years, India has considered efforts for maritime security as an important focus point, strengthened its presence in the Indian Ocean, and clearly recognized China's increased activity in the Indian Ocean.

2 Military

India is vigorously strengthening and reorganizing its armed forces. It is considering the establishment of unified combatant commands with the aim of strengthening operational and organizational cooperation among military services. Under the "Make in India" and "Self-Reliant India" initiatives, the Modi government is actively working toward the domestic production and modernization of military equipment and taking measures to promote exports.

The Army has approximately 1.25 million personnel, making it one of the largest land forces in the world. It is believed that the army strengthens firepower by deploying self-propelled artillery guns and howitzers, and promotes deployment of drones for attack and reconnaissance near the India-China border. Furthermore, the Army is proceeding with unit reorganization, including announcing the formation of new units to be deployed along the border in July 2025.[1]

The Navy has placed "sea control"[2] as the key concept to operate the fleet, and aircraft carriers as the key vessels for the sea control concept. In addition, the Navy mentioned its plan to build three aircraft carrier battle groups. The country's first domestically built aircraft carrier "Vikrant" was commissioned in September 2022. This brings the total number of Indian Navy's aircraft carriers to two, including "Vikramaditya," which was modified after purchasing it from Russia. Furthermore, India places importance on submarine operations, and is proceeding with the development of submarines, including the commissioning of the second domestically produced Arihant-class nuclear-powered submarine "Arighaat" in August 2024. In addition, it is advancing the development of its anti-submarine capabilities, for example by commissioning new types of anti-submarine vessels in June and November 2025. In addition, in March 2024, the Navy established a new base on Minicoy Island, which is on the southern tip of the Lakshadweep islands on the west coast of India, in an effort to strengthen surveillance and supply capabilities in the Indian Ocean region.

The Air Force is operating French-made Rafale and Mirage 2000 fighters, as well as Russian-made Su-30MKI fighters and domestically produced Tejas light combat aircraft. In addition, from August to September 2024, the Air Force conducted its first multilateral air force exercise "Tarang Shakti 2024," and is striving to strengthen ties with the air forces of partner countries.

As for its air defense system, in addition to deploying the Russian-made "S-400" surface-to-air missile system and other systems, India is also advancing the development of its own ballistic missile defense system. Furthermore, in a speech in August 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the "Mission Sudarshan Chakra" initiative to expand India's multidomain defense network, including air defense, to a nationwide scale and expand its coverage to all public facilities by 2035. In the same month, the Defence

1 The newly formed units include the Rudra Brigades and the Bhairav Battalions, and it has been pointed out that their purpose is to enable rapid troop deployment along the border and to enhance the operational and response capabilities of drones.

2 According to the Indian Navy's "Maritime Security Strategy," "sea control" means the condition where one is able to use a defined maritime space (including surface, underwater, and air) for a specific period of time and for one's own purposes, and its use by adversaries can be denied.

Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) announced the success of the first flight test of the Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) which is currently under development,[3] so attention will be focused on developments concerning this initiative going forward.

In addition, India is said to have approximately 180 nuclear warheads as of January 2025, and while it maintains the nuclear doctrine published in 2003[4] and policies that include the unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests announced immediately after the nuclear test in 1998, it conducted its first test launch of its intermediate-range ballistic missile Agni-V with MIRV (multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle) technology in March 2024 and announced the country's first-ever successful flight test of a long-range hypersonic missile in November of the same year. Furthermore, the country has promoted the development, performance enhancement, diversification, and deployment of a range of ballistic and cruise missiles. For example, in September 2025, it announced the successful launch of the intermediate-range ballistic missile "Agni-Prime" from a rail-based mobile launch system.

3 Relations with Countries and Regions

(1) Relations with the United States

In line with their Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, India and the United States have steadily been deepening their defense and security cooperation in recent years. The two countries also participate in joint exercises across military services, including the long-standing bilateral joint army exercise "Yudh Abhyas," which focuses on counter-terrorism. In addition, according to an announcement by the U.S. military, in October 2025, P-8 patrol aircraft from both militaries participated in joint training exercises, including anti-submarine warfare, near Diego Garcia Island.

In the same month, Indian Minister of Defence Rajnath Singh and U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth met in Kuala Lumpur and signed the Framework for the U.S.-India Major Defense Partnership, which has been renewed every ten years since 2005, in order to deepen their relationship of cooperative defense.



Secretary of War Pete Hegseth and Minister of Defence Singh sign the Framework for the U.S.-India Major Defense Partnership
[U.S. Department of War]

(2) Relations with China

Although economic ties between China and India are strengthening, the two countries have not demarcated their borders in areas such as Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh.

In May 2020, a clash between Chinese and Indian forces occurred near the China-India border in Ladakh, which is part of the Kashmir region of India, and tensions between the two countries escalated with the first deadly clash in 45 years in June of the same year. Since then, China and India have regularly held commander-level meetings based on the management agreement for the Line of Actual Control (LAC), a temporary border between the two countries. In October 2024, India announced that the two countries agreed on patrolling agreements along the LAC. During the same month, the countries also held the first China-India Summit in five years, where the LAC agreement was welcomed. They later held a China-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting and China-India Defense Ministers' Meeting in November as well as a Special Representatives' Meeting in December, the first one in five years. Furthermore, efforts toward a gradual easing of tensions are continuing. For example, in August 2025, Prime Minister Modi, who was visiting China for the first time in approximately seven years, and President Xi Jinping met during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit held in Tianjin.

(3) Relations with Russia

India and Russia have had an long-standing relationship, which goes back to the days of the Soviet Union, and they cooperate in a wide range of fields based on their "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership." The two countries maintain a cooperative relationship in terms of their military

3 According to an announcement by the Government of India, IADWS is a multilayered air defense system comprised of surface-to-air missiles and directed energy weapons using high-powered lasers. The government announced that, in this test, they conducted trials targeting multiple drones at different distances and altitudes and successfully shot them down.

4 India raises its continued commitment to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, along with credible minimum deterrence, its "no first use policy," and its policy of no use against non-nuclear weapon countries in the nuclear doctrine published in 2003.

equipment as well, with India using Russian-made Su-30MKI fighter jets and other equipment. In addition, India and Russia founded the joint venture "BrahMos Aerospace" and later jointly developed and started producing the supersonic cruise missile "BrahMos." Meanwhile, Russia's aggression against Ukraine is making it difficult for India to repair parts for Russian-made fighter jets and transport aircraft. As a result, India is working to produce such parts domestically.

Across military services, the two countries have been conducting the bilateral joint exercise "INDRA" for many years. From March to April 2025, their two navies conducted the naval exercise "INDRA 2025" in the Bay of Bengal, and in October of the same year, their two ground forces conducted a joint exercise, also called "INDRA 2025," in the state of Rajasthan in northwestern India. Furthermore, in September of the same year, the Indian military participated in the joint strategic exercise "Zapad 2025" conducted in Russia.

In December of the same year, a meeting was held between Indian Defence Minister Singh and Russian Defence Minister Andrei Belousov in New Delhi, and President Putin also visited India for the first time in approximately four years and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Modi.



President Putin and Prime Minister Modi having a conversation as they travel by car before the India-Russia Annual Summit (December 2025) [AFP-Jiji]

(4) Relations with South Asian Countries and Southeast Asia

India exports and provides military equipment as a part of cooperation that India promotes with other South Asian countries in the security field under its "Neighborhood First Policy." On the other hand, India remains vigilant regarding China's growing influence in South Asia, and showed apprehension to Chinese tracking ship Yuan Wang 5's port call to the Port of Hambantota in Sri Lanka from July to August 2022.

Based on its Act East policy, India continues to engage with Southeast Asian nations and other countries in the Indo-Pacific region on a bilateral, regional, and multilateral basis, and on the military front, it is conducting regular joint exercises with and port calls by Navy vessels to each of these countries. India is exporting the supersonic cruise missile BrahMos, which India jointly developed with Russia, to the Philippines, and India and the Philippines conducted their first bilateral naval exercise in the South China Sea in August 2025 and their second bilateral naval exercise in November of the same year.

2 Pakistan

1 General Situation

Wedged between the powerful South Asian nation of India and politically unstable Afghanistan, and sharing borders with China and Iran, Pakistan is placed in a geopolitically significant and complex position. Particularly in the border area with Afghanistan, extremist organizations are engaging in cross-border terrorist activities, and Pakistan's actions in the fight against terrorism could significantly impact the stability of Afghanistan.[5] Since October 2025, sporadic exchanges of attacks have occurred near the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

5 Pakistan Security Report 2025, published by the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), pointed out that, in 2025, Pakistan experienced 699 terrorist attacks, a 39% increase compared to the previous year. The report further noted that over 95% of terrorist attacks in that year were concentrated in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan provinces along the Afghan border.

2 Military

Pakistan takes the position that maintaining nuclear deterrence against attacks with nuclear and conventional weapons by India is essential to ensure national security and self-defense. It has been pointed out that Pakistan retains around 170 nuclear warheads as of January 2025. The development of ballistic missiles and cruise missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads is still continuing. Tactical nuclear missile "Nasr" and IRBM "Shaheen-II" are already operative. In addition, the flight test of ground-to-ground missile "Shaheen-III" with the range of 2,750 km was successfully conducted in April 2022. Pakistan has been enhancing its military capabilities, as evidenced by the October 2023 launch test of the purportedly MIRV-capable ballistic missile "Ababeel."

In recent years, Pakistan has also been promoting the modernization of equipment, and while it makes attempts at domestic production through joint development of equipment and technology transfer, it promotes its relationship with China in military fields, and rising dependence on China is observed. The Pakistan Army operates "Al-Khalid" tanks, which were jointly developed with China, as its main battle tanks. Pakistan is enhancing the Comprehensive Layered Integrated Air Defense (CLIAD) system by purchasing air defense systems such as "LY-80" and "HQ-9/P" from China, and Pakistan is also advancing the introduction of drones by procuring them from China and Türkiye and advancing the development of domestically produced drones.

The Pakistan Navy is replacing or augmenting its aging warships, introducing submarines, and cooperating with China and Türkiye while also conducting bilateral exercises with both countries.

The Pakistan Air Force operates JF-17 fighter jets, which were jointly developed with China and produced domestically, Chinese-made J-10CE fighter jets, and other aircraft.

In November 2025, the constitution was amended, reorganizing the military by creating a new rank, Chief of Defence Forces, with unified command authority over the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and making the rank of Field Marshal a lifetime rank with immunity from prosecution. In December of the same year, Field Marshal Asim Munir, the Chief of Army Staff, was appointed Chief of Defence Forces.

3 Relations with Countries and Regions

(1) Relations with the United States

The United States designated Pakistan as a "Major Non-NATO Ally" in 2004 and has strengthened the relationship because Pakistan has cooperated with the United States in the field of counterterrorism since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. However, the two countries continued a tense relationship, with both countries blaming each other over their responses to terrorism. The relationship between Pakistan and the United States improved under the Sharif administration inaugurated in April 2022. Later, in September of the same year, the U.S. Department of State decided to approve a contract for a maximum of USD 450 million related to F-16 fighter-jet maintenance and support for Pakistan to facilitate counterterrorism operations.

At the same time, in December 2024, the United States, in response to the ongoing threat posed by the proliferation of long-range missiles, announced its intention to impose sanctions on four Pakistan-based companies and organizations involved in Pakistan's ballistic missile program.

The United States and Pakistan are regularly conducting bilateral joint exercises aimed at counterterrorism across the military services, and, in July 2025, a U.S. Navy guided-missile destroyer and a Pakistan Navy frigate conducted a naval exercise in the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, in June of the same year, Chief of Army Staff Munir attended a luncheon at the White House at the invitation of President Trump, and in September of the same year, he met with President Trump again at the White House together with Prime Minister Sharif.

In February 2026, Israel and the United States launched attacks against Iran, and Iran subsequently retaliated with attacks against Israel and other countries in the region, resulting in an exchange of attacks. However, in April of the same year, through the mediation of Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif and others, both sides agreed to a temporary ceasefire. Subsequently, peace negotiations mediated by Pakistan and others were conducted between the United States and Iran. In June, the United States and Iran announced that they had signed a memorandum of understanding on ending hostilities and other matters.

(2) Relations with China

Pakistan and China maintain a close relationship under their "all-weather strategic partnership," and mutual visits by their summit leaders take place frequently. Their cooperation in the military sector, including bilateral training, exporting weapons, and transferring military technology, is also deepening. As the importance of sea lines of communication increases for China, it is believed that the importance of Pakistan is rising for China accordingly, partly because, geopolitically, Pakistan faces the Indian Ocean.

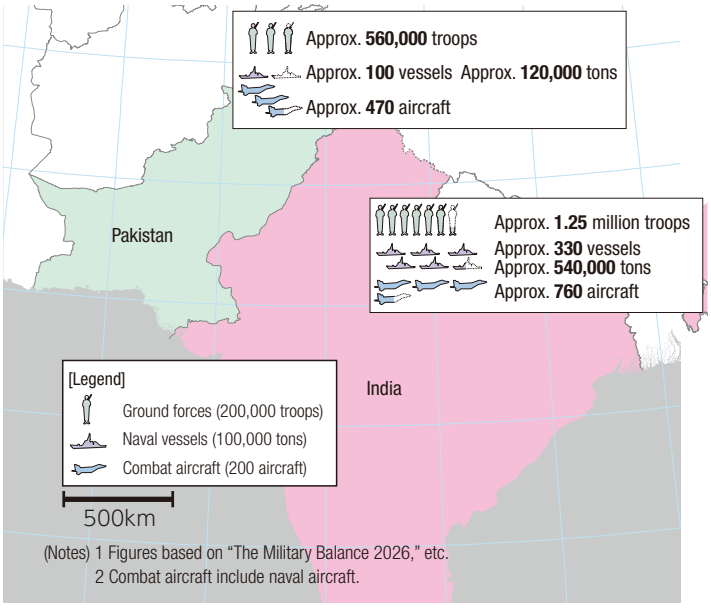
At the same time, there have been more and more terrorist attacks aimed at Chinese people in Pakistan in recent years, which is a serious issue. In response, Pakistan and China conducted their bilateral counterterrorism exercise "Warrior" in Pakistan from November to December 2024—the first such exercise in five years since 2019—and they conducted the same exercise from November to December 2025. In terms of military equipment, the introduction of the Chinese-made attack helicopter Z-10ME was announced in August of the same year, and the launch of the fourth Hangor-class submarine, manufactured in China, was announced in December of the same year.

3 Disputes over the Sovereignty of Kashmir

India and Pakistan have disputes over the sovereignty of Kashmir,[6] and have had three armed conflicts of significant scope. In the Kashmir region, collisions often occurred along the Line of Control, and the two countries repeatedly restarted and suspended dialogue. Finally, the countries agreed to comply with the ceasefire in February 2021. The Indian Ministry of Defence announced in December 2023 that this agreement significantly improved the situation. Triggered by a terrorist attack which occurred in April 2025 (known as the Pahalgam incident), an exchange of attacks between the two countries' militaries occurred in May of the same year, but, that same month, it was announced that both countries had agreed to halt military action. Nonetheless, relations between India and Pakistan continued to be tense, and in April of the same year, following the Pahalgam incident, India announced a unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, and Pakistan, while seeking a peaceful solution through a UN Security Council resolution, is claiming that India's suspension of water flow could constitute an "act of war."

See Fig. I-3-8-1 (Military Forces of India and Pakistan (approximate numbers))

Fig. I-3-8-1 Military Forces of India and Pakistan (approximate numbers)



(Notes) 1 Figures based on "The Military Balance 2026," etc.
2 Combat aircraft include naval aircraft.

6 India asserts the accession of Kashmir to India, based on the Instrument of Accession document by which the ruler of Kashmir acceded to India at the time of Pakistan's independence, and contends that this matter should be resolved through bilateral negotiations on the basis of the 1972 Simla Agreement (an agreement on the peaceful resolution of disputes and the withdrawal of their military forces that was reached following a summit meeting held in Simla in northern India). On the other hand, Pakistan declares that this should be decided through a referendum, in line with a 1948 UN resolution. The two countries have taken a significantly different fundamental stance toward the resolution of the dispute.

Section 9 Europe and Canada

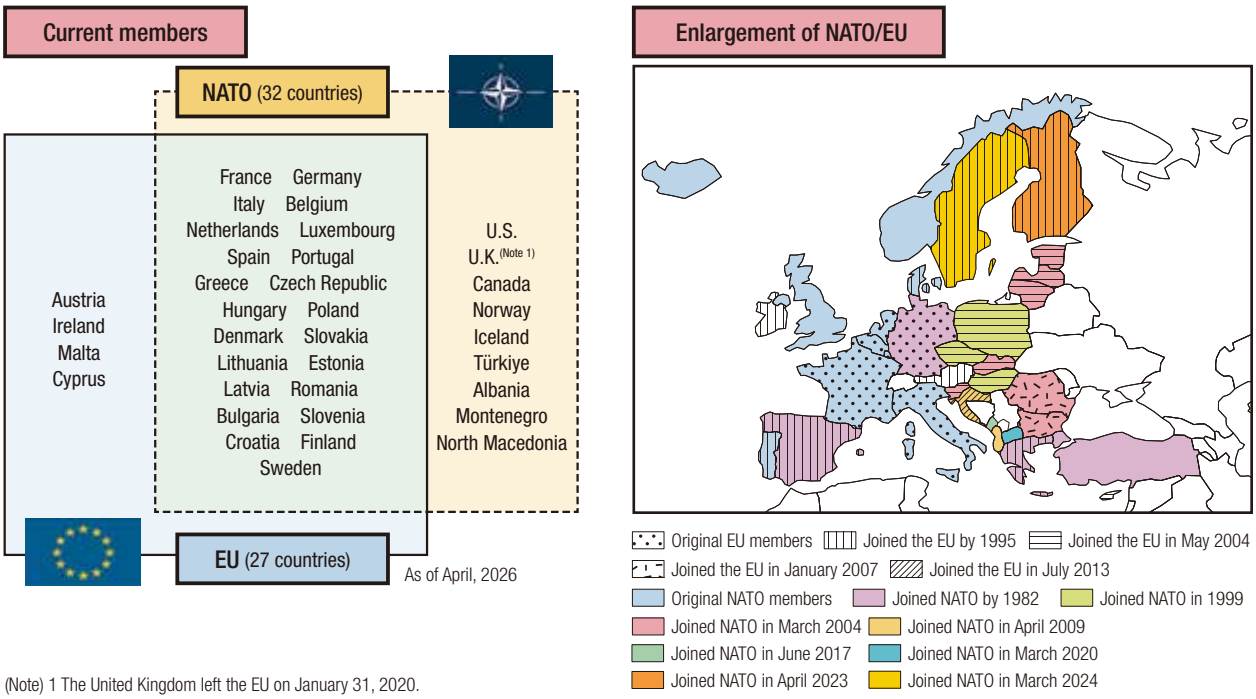
1 General Situation

With the end of the Cold War, many European countries and Canada now recognize the need to address diverse security challenges. At the same time, these countries had recognized that the threat of large-scale invasion by other countries had disappeared. Nevertheless, since the heightening of tensions in Ukraine from February 2014 and particularly with Russia's aggression against Ukraine that began in February 2022, there has been a growing need to revisit existing strategies and plan new concepts in order to deal with Russia's unilateral changes to the status quo by force as well as hybrid warfare. In addition, border security problems remain a challenge, including those regarding refugees and migrants that have rapidly increased due to turmoil in the Middle East.

To respond to such challenges and situations, Europe and Canada have sought to further strengthen and expand multilateral frameworks, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). At the same time, they are working to contribute to the security and stability of the international community by proactively participating in activities outside the region. Moreover, steps are taken at the national level by reviewing security and defense strategies, reforming national defense systems, and strengthening bilateral and multilateral defense and security cooperation.

See Fig. I-3-9-1 (Enlargement of NATO/EU), Chapter 2, 3 (Effects of Russian Aggression against Ukraine on International Affairs and How Various Countries Respond to It)

Fig. I-3-9-1 Enlargement of NATO/EU



(Note) 1 The United Kingdom left the EU on January 31, 2020.

2 Enhancement of Multilateral Security Frameworks

1 NATO

Founded for the core task of collective defense among member states, NATO celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2024. It has expanded the scope of its activities to conflict prevention and crisis management outside its area since the end of the Cold War. NATO's three core tasks are deterrence and defense, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security.

Amid an increasing sense of crisis among member states in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, a new NATO Strategic Concept was adopted at the NATO Summit in June 2022 for the first time in 12 years since 2010. This new Strategic Concept states that the Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace and that the possibility of an attack against member states' sovereignty and territorial integrity cannot be discounted. In addition, NATO placed Russia as the most significant and direct threat to member states' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. This new Strategic Concept mentioned China for the first time, stating that China's ambition and coercive policies challenge NATO's interests, security and values.

The Washington Summit Declaration, issued at the NATO Summit in July 2024, newly referenced emerging cooperation between Russia and North Korea as well as between Russia and China. Regarding military cooperation between Russia and North Korea, the declaration stated that it is having a serious impact on Euro-Atlantic security and expressed grave concern. Regarding China, the declaration noted that the country is a decisive supporter of Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

In addition, recognizing that the situation in the Indo-Pacific region could directly impact Euro-Atlantic security, NATO decided to advance cooperation with the Indo Pacific 4 (IP4) and its partners in the Indo-Pacific region (Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and Japan), in flagship projects including support for Ukraine, cyber defense, measures against disinformation, and technology.

Through these actions, NATO has emphasized one of its core missions of defending member states while strengthening deterrence and defense capabilities based on the understanding that the security environment has drastically changed.

For example, since 2014, NATO has overhauled its plans and structures to ensure member states can respond to any threat from any direction, with an agreement to establish a forward presence, particularly in the east. Following the initial deployment of multinational battalion-sized battlegroups in the three Baltic states and Poland in 2017, NATO decided to deploy battlegroups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia in 2022 and in Finland in 2025. Note that at the NATO Summit in June 2022, it was agreed that these battlegroups would be expanded from battalion to brigade size as needed.[1]

Most recently, in September 2025, Poland announced that it had shot down Russian drones that had violated its airspace. Since then, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) of unknown nationality have continued to enter the airspace of various European countries. In response, NATO launched Eastern Sentry, an enhanced monitoring activity with the objective of strengthening its defense posture on its eastern flank from the Baltic states and Poland to the Black Sea.

Regarding NATO member states' defense spending, at the NATO Summit held in The Hague in June 2025, it was agreed that the member states would raise their target for defense spending to 5% of GDP by 2035. Under this commitment, at least 3.5% of GDP is to be devoted to core defense expenditure, while up to 1.5% is allocated to broader defense- and security-related expenditure. Core defense expenditure is defined by NATO as payments made by an Allied national government specifically to meet the needs of (1) its own armed forces, (2) those of other Allies or (3) the needs of the Alliance as a whole. Moreover, it was stated that direct contributions to Ukraine's defense and its defense industry could be included in NATO-standard defense spending. In August 2025, NATO announced that it expected the FY2025 defense spending of all its member states except Iceland, which does not possess armed forces, to reach 2% of GDP.



A house in eastern Poland damaged by a drone (September 2025) [EPA-Jiji]

1 In 2024, the Latvia battlegroup was upgraded to a brigade.

2 EU

The EU is strengthening its security initiatives under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).[2]

Furthermore, the EU is enhancing its engagement with the Indo-Pacific region, disclosing its first Indo-Pacific strategy in April 2021 followed by a joint communication detailing it in September. This joint communication states that the growing tensions resulting from China's significant military build-up in the Indo-Pacific region and show of force in the East China Sea, South China Sea, and Taiwan Strait have a direct effect on security and prosperity in Europe. It also states that the EU will seek to solidify and defend the rules-based international order, by reinforcing partnership with countries sharing the same values, including Japan, and economic relations with Taiwan, including through trading and investments.

In March 2022, the European Council adopted the Strategic Compass which set out a common strategic vision for EU security and defense policy for the next five to ten years. The document specified that the EU will develop an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of up to 5,000 troops for different types of crises, including rescue and evacuation, which commenced operation in May 2025.

Furthermore, in March of the same year, the European Commission published its White Paper for European Defence - Readiness 2030, which calls for each EU member state to implement policies to increase its defense expenditure through the ReArm Europe Plan, which includes the relaxation of fiscal discipline. Moreover, in October of the same year, the European Commission announced the Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030, an initiative for defense buildup by 2030, and stated that, in light of threats in recent years such as hybrid warfare, it would endorse European Drone Defence Initiative and the Eastern Flank Watch as priority flagships. These two initiatives are intended to complement other NATO activities including Eastern Sentry, which bolsters the air defense monitoring of the eastern flank.

3 Relations with China

China's recent rise has attracted attention from NATO as well. The 2022 NATO Strategic Concept states that "The People's Republic of China's (PRC) stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values," and mentioned China's rapid enhancement of nuclear forces, absence of transparency, and malicious hybrid and cyber activities. On this basis, it mentioned that NATO will engage constructively with China for the alliance's security interests, and protect against China's coercive efforts to divide NATO.

In June 2025, in a press conference before the NATO Summit held in The Hague, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte stated that the massive build-up of the military capabilities of Russia and China was a direct threat to the territories of the NATO member states. Furthermore, he brought up China, along with North Korea and Iran, as countries supporting Russia and have plunged Ukraine into a conflict which affects the whole world. Moreover, since 2025, he has made multiple statements to the effect that China would seek Russia's cooperation in future regional conflicts, and in addition he has continuously made statements about the impact and dangers of China-Russia cooperation.

China's relations with European countries, including NATO's policy on engagement with China, should be continuously watched.

3 Security/Defense Policies of European Countries and Others

1 The United Kingdom

After the end of the Cold War, the United Kingdom, perceiving that there is no direct military threat against the country, advanced national defense reform with particular focus on improving its overseas deployment capability and readiness, in order to deal with new threats such as international terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The then Sunak administration announced Integrated Review Refresh 2023 in March 2023. In the 2023 Refresh, the administration stated that the United Kingdom considers the Euro-Atlantic region a first-order priority and views Russia as "the most acute threat." It also stated that the United Kingdom would further enhance NATO and contest malign Russian influence by exposing disinformation. In addition, the administration evaluated that China "is posing an epoch-defining and systematic challenge." Furthermore, it stated that the United Kingdom considers the Indo-Pacific region as a permanent pillar of the U.K. international policy, supports the concept of a free and open Indo-Pacific and adopts a policy to enhance its commitment in the Indo-Pacific region through various measures such as building deep relations anchored in decades-long economic, technological and

2 The EU, although it has a property of non-binding multilateral cooperation, introduced the CFSP, which covers all areas of foreign and security policy based on the Treaty of Maastricht, which took effect in 1993. In June 1999, the European Council decided to implement the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) to offer peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance activities in conflict areas, as a part of the CFSP framework. The Treaty of Lisbon, made effective in 2009, renamed the ESDP to CSDP and clearly positioned it as an integral part of the CFSP.

security ties with partners including Japan.

In June 2025, the Keir Starmer administration announced the 2025 Strategic Defence Review (SDR 2025). With the recognition that Europe faces more serious and less predictable threats than any time since the Cold War, the review presents a policy which prioritizes strengthening the defense capabilities of Europe and continues to position Russia as "an immediate and pressing threat." Furthermore, the review evaluates China to be "a sophisticated and persistent challenge," and points out that China's military exercises around Taiwan risk dangerous escalation in the Taiwan Strait, and that its aggressive actions are fueling tension in the South China Sea. Note that the review asserts that the Indo-Pacific is a strategically important region for the United Kingdom, and mentions cooperation with the IP4, NATO's partner countries in the region.

The United Kingdom is continuing its engagement with the Indo-Pacific region. According to an announcement from the U.K. Ministry of Defence, in July 2024, the United Kingdom participated in the Royal Australian Air Force's Exercise Pitch Black 24. In 2025, the carrier strike group (CSG), with the aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales as its flagship, conducted deployment activities in the Indo-Pacific region for over approximately eight months. This CSG called at the ports of countries in the region, including Japan, and carried out joint exercises with the countries, including participation in the multilateral joint exercise Talisman Sabre 25 hosted by the United States and Australia.

In addition, the United Kingdom has conducted monitoring and surveillance activities in waters around Japan in response to illicit maritime activities including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean-flagged vessels since FY2018. In June 2025, HMS Spey, and in September, HMS Richmond conducted monitoring and surveillance activities.

Furthermore, the SDR 2025 states that the Middle East is significant to U.K. security and prosperity in terms of global trade and global energy supplies, and in response to the exchanges of attacks between the United States/Israel and Iran that began in February 2026, the United Kingdom provided support to the air defense capabilities of the Gulf states by dispatching additional fighter jets and deploying air defense systems. Moreover, the United Kingdom has been leading multilateral efforts to ensure safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, for example, on March 19 of the same year, it issued the Joint Statement from the Leaders of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan, Canada and others on the Strait of Hormuz, and in addition, on April 17, it co-hosted an online leaders' meeting with France.

2 France

Since the end of the Cold War, France has focused on maintaining independence of its defense policies, while having led initiatives to enhance the defense structure and capability in Europe. It has worked on the development of its military capacity by streamlining and integrating military bases, dealing with operational requirements to strengthen its defense capability, as well as enhancing its intelligence capabilities and modernizing equipment required in the future.

In July 2025, the updated National Strategic Review 2025 was announced as a consequence of further deterioration in the global security environment. It stated that there is a high risk of a high-intensity conflict occurring in Europe by 2030, and presented the policies of acceleration of rearmament and strengthened cooperation with allies. It positioned Russia as the most direct threat to France and the countries of Europe, and pointed out that it is engaging in nuclear intimidation, cyberattacks, and attempts to interfere in electoral processes, and is strengthening its partnerships with China and North Korea. It states that China's confrontation with the United States is unavoidable and China has the goal of becoming the world's leading power, surpassing the United States, by 2050, and pointed out that China is strengthening its military exercises around Taiwan on an unprecedented scale and expanding its influence in Europe and Africa as well.

In November 2025, President Emmanuel Macron announced the introduction of a new volunteer national military service system, and recruitment was commenced from January 2026. This system has set the goal of 50,000 people participating in military service by 2035.[3]

Since France has territories in the Indo-Pacific region, it is the only EU member state that has a continuous military presence in the region, with approximately 7,000 personnel and vessels permanently stationed. France places importance on commitment to the region, and its Defense Strategy in the Indo-Pacific, which was published in June 2019, states that China's growing influence is shifting the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific region and highlights the importance of strengthening partnerships with the United States, Australia, India, and Japan.

Based on this policy of active involvement in the Indo-Pacific region, in 2025, the CSG with the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle as its flagship was dispatched to the Indo-Pacific region as part of the mission Clemenceau 25, during which the CSG participated in joint trainings with the United States, Canada, Australia, and other states. In February of the same year, this CSG also participated in the Japan-U.S.-France multilateral exercise "Pacific Steller."

In addition, France has conducted monitoring and surveillance activities in response to illicit maritime activities,

3 According to the French Ministry of Armed Forces, the military service period will be ten months, and men and women aged 18 to 25 will be recruited. The recruits will be assigned to metropolitan France and its overseas territories, but are not expected to be deployed to overseas operations or conflict regions.

including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean-flagged vessels, since 2019. Monitoring and surveillance activities were conducted in 2025 by the logistic supply ship Jacques Chevallier and others in February, the frigate Prairial in October, and the patrol aircraft Falcon 50M from October to November.

France also prioritizes its involvement in the Middle East. The French Armed Forces have been conducting activities in Iraq since 2014, providing military support to Iraqi security forces fighting the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Furthermore, in response to the exchanges of attacks between the United States/Israel and Iran that began in February 2026, France supported the defense of the Middle Eastern countries by deploying a CSG, with the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle as its flagship, to the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, and surrounding areas, and by providing armored vehicles to Lebanon. Moreover, France has been leading multilateral efforts to ensure safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz. For example, on March 19 of the same year, it issued a joint statement on the Strait of Hormuz together with the leaders of the United Kingdom and other participating countries, and in addition, on April 17, it co-hosted an online leaders' meeting with the United Kingdom and issued the France-U.K. Joint Leaders' Statement, including moves toward the establishment of a multinational mission.

See Section 10-2-2 (Relations between African Countries and Other Countries)

3 Germany

While Germany has been implementing a large-scale reduction of its military personnel since the end of the Cold War, it has been gradually expanding the dispatch of its armed forces overseas. At the same time, Germany has advanced the reform of its armed forces to enable them to execute multiple responsibilities encompassing conflict prevention and risk management in the context of multilateral organizations, including NATO, the EU, and the UN.

However, following Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Germany made major changes to its security policy, acknowledging that it was at a "watershed era (Zeitenwende)." Specifically, it provided arms to Ukraine, imposed strict economic sanctions against Russia, increased its defense expenditure to meet NATO capability targets and enhanced investment in security-related fields, strengthened its contribution to NATO, and established a special fund equivalent to 100 billion euros for the Armed Forces.

In June 2023, the German government announced the first comprehensive national security strategy that considered security as part of all policy areas, not just the sum of diplomatic and military means. The government assessed Russia as the most significant threat in the Euro-Atlantic region, and pointed out that while China is a partner in solving global issues, the elements of systemic rivalry and competition have increased. Regarding defense expenditure, the government clarified its policy of allocating 2% of GDP as an average over a multi-year period.

Furthermore, in November the same year, the German Ministry of Defense announced the Defense Policy Guidelines 2023 based on said strategy. Recognizing that Germany must become the backbone of deterrence and collective defense in Europe, the policy stated that Germany is returning the focus of the Armed Forces to its core task: national and collective defense. In particular, it underlined Germany's responsibility to make even more significant contributions to the defense of its NATO allies on the eastern flank, signified by the permanent deployment of a German brigade in Lithuania. In September 2024, Germany signed the defense agreement serving as the legal basis for the brigade to be permanently stationed in Lithuania and then established the brigade in April 2025. The aim is for the brigade to achieve full operational capability with approximately 5,000 personnel by 2027.

In March 2025, the Basic Law was amended to exempt increased defense expenditure from the application of strict fiscal discipline regulations, and in June, it was decided that defense expenditure would be increased to 3.5% of GDP by FY2029. Moreover, in May 2025, Chancellor Friedrich Merz stated in a policy speech that Germany would accelerate efforts to strengthen its defense capabilities in order to make the German military the strongest conventional forces in Europe. In December of the same year, the federal parliament passed a new military service law reforming the existing volunteer military service system,[4] and the German government has set a goal of increasing its active-duty force to over 260,000 and its reserve force to 200,000 by 2035.

Regarding the Indo-Pacific, the German government formulated the "Policy guidelines for the Indo-Pacific" in 2020 and announced that it would strengthen its involvement in security policies regarding this region. In recent years, Germany has continued to dispatch assets to the Indo-Pacific region to strengthen its presence, while at the same time placing emphasis on cooperation with partner countries that share common values, such as Japan.

In 2024, Germany dispatched the frigate FGS Baden-Württemberg and the replenishment ship FGS Frankfurt am Main to the Indo-Pacific region. According to an announcement by the German Armed Forces, the two ships participated in "RIMPAC 24," the multilateral joint exercise organized by the U.S. Navy from June to August in that year, in order to enhance multilateral cooperation and interoperability.

4 According to the German Federal Government, the military service period will be at least six months, and questionnaires will be sent to all 18-year-old men and women asking about their willingness to enlist, and they will be asked to respond to the questionnaire. Note that it is obligatory for men to respond but voluntary for women.

In addition, Germany has conducted monitoring and surveillance activities in response to illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean-flagged vessels, since 2021. From August to September of 2024, the two vessels above also conducted such activities.

4 Canada

In a National Defence Policy paper published in April 2024, the Department of National Defence of Canada indicated that the world is currently in a period of global uncertainty due to the three connected trends: climate change, the rise of autocracies and destructive states such as Russia and China, and the spread of new and disruptive technologies. Based on this recognition of the security environment, Canada has positioned the securing of its sovereignty in the Arctic and North American region as the core of its defense policy. To ensure a ready, resilient and relevant Canadian Armed Forces, Canada has decided to update its human resource base and equipment, procurement reform, renewing national defense infrastructure, promote digitalization, and building stronger defense industrial base. Furthermore, the Mark Carney administration inaugurated in March 2025 announced a plan to increase and accelerate defense investment in June of the same year, and planned to increase investment in the field of defense by approximately CAD 9 billion and achieve defense expenditure of 2% of GDP during FY2025. In addition to this, Canada announced its Arctic Foreign Policy in December 2024. This policy takes into account changes in the security environment surrounding the Arctic Circle, such as increased access to Arctic resources and shipping routes due to climate change, Russia's strengthening military presence, and growing interest from China and other countries. Specific measures include appointment of an Arctic ambassador and establishing new consulates in Alaska and Greenland. Furthermore, Canada has been conducting the military exercise Operation Nanook in the Arctic region since 2007, and in addition it has been advancing industrial and other cooperation with the United States and Finland with the objective of strengthening icebreaker ship design and construction capabilities.

Canada regards the United States as its most important ally and conducts air defense, space defense, and maritime monitoring and surveillance activities in North America jointly with the United States through the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). As a founding member, Canada also places importance on its relationship with NATO, and has been actively participating in NATO-led operations. The country has also traditionally supported UN activities.

Concerning its involvement in the Indo-Pacific region, in November 2022, Canada announced its first Indo-Pacific Strategy as a comprehensive road map to deepen its engagement in the region over the next decade. In the strategy, China is mentioned as an "increasingly disruptive global power" and that it is looking to shape the international order into a more permissive environment for China's interests and values. The strategy also states that Canada will challenge China if it engages in behavior that undermines Canada's national interests or those of its partners in the region. On the other hand, Canada has expressed a willingness to cooperate with China on the solutions for climate change and other global problems, and Prime Minister Carney visited China in January 2026 and announced a "new strategic partnership" with China.

In addition, in the aforementioned Indo-Pacific Strategy, Canada has clarified its strategic objectives, such as promoting the peace, resiliency, and security of the region as well as expanding and deepening security relationships with allies and partners that include Japan. Canada has also stated its intention to continue monitoring and surveillance activities[5] in response to illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean-flagged vessels, which started in April 2018. Canada conducted monitoring and surveillance activities using its Royal Canadian Air Force CP-140 patrol aircraft from late March to early April 2026. Moreover, in the strategy, it is stated that Canada will strengthen the presence of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Indo-Pacific region, for example by increasing the number of frigates deployed there. Note that since 2018, Royal Canadian Navy vessels have transited through the Taiwan Strait[6] in accordance with international law.

5 They have been deployed within the framework of "Operation NEON" to execute the sanctions against North Korea from June 2019. In October 2023, a Canadian military patrol aircraft in the operation was reportedly approached in an unusual manner by Chinese military aircraft over the East China Sea.

6 The activity is a part of the "Operation PROJECTION" to ensure worldwide maritime security for the purpose of showing Canadian commitment to the peace of the world.

Section 10 Middle East and Africa

1 Middle East

1 General Situation

The Middle East region is a geopolitical key point which connects Asia and Europe. In addition, the Middle East is a major source of energy supply for the world and contains major routes for international commerce. Japan is also dependent on the region for approximately 90% of its crude oil imports. Peace and stability in the Middle East region is extremely important for the peace and prosperity of the international community, including Japan.

At the same time, this region has been experiencing ongoing instability, including high tension between Iran on the one hand and the United States and Israel on the other, and clashes between Israel and Palestinian militants.

2 Situation in Israel

(1) Military Affairs

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) state that their mission is the defense of the State of Israel and its citizens. Israel maintains a qualitative military advantage over neighboring countries, including its possession of F-35 fighter jets. In addition, to defend itself against rockets, missiles, and other weapons launched by neighboring countries and organizations, Israel has a multi-layered air defense system consisting of the Arrow, the David's Sling, and the Iron Dome.

(2) Conflict with Palestinian Militants

In 1993, Israel and Palestine agreed to the Oslo Accords, which assigned provisional autonomy over the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and the two countries started the peace process, negotiating to achieve a peaceful coexistence. However, there has been little progress on these negotiations, Israel and Palestine have repeatedly clashed, and the peace process has stagnated.

Meanwhile, on October 7, 2023, Palestinian militants such as Hamas, which is active in the Gaza Strip, fired thousands of rockets at Israel. Additionally, numerous militants invaded Israeli territory, killing and abducting Israeli soldiers and civilians, including foreigners. In response, the IDF began airstrikes on the Gaza Strip the same day as well as ground operations in the Gaza Strip starting on October 27.

In the Gaza Strip, the IDF killed Hamas fighters, seized or destroyed weapons, demolished an underground tunnel network, and rescued hostages, but many civilian casualties have been caused by the attacks by the IDF in the Gaza Strip.

Later, on January 19, 2025, a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, an agreement facilitated by mediators such as the United States, Egypt, and Qatar, went into effect. Although some of the hostages were released based on this agreement, on March 18, the IDF resumed large-scale attacks, claiming that Hamas had rejected a proposed ceasefire extension.

Although negotiations aimed at getting the remaining hostages released or achieving a ceasefire struggled after that, on September 29 of the same year, the United States announced the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, including a ceasefire and a future governance administration, and on October 9 of the same year, a first-phase agreement was established between the parties based on this plan. The IDF withdrew its forces to the line stipulated in the agreement and Hamas released all of the surviving hostages. On the other hand, Hamas failed to return the bodies of killed hostages within the deadline, which Israel strongly condemned as a violation of the ceasefire agreement.

On the 19th of the same month, Israel launched a large-scale retaliatory attack, claiming that the deaths of Israeli soldiers in the Gaza Strip were caused by an attack by Hamas. Subsequently, although Israel has since expressed its intention to maintain the ceasefire, sporadic attacks have been occurring on a daily basis.

During this period, Hamas also held consultations regarding the phased return of the hostages' bodies and the second phase of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, and on January 14, 2026, U.S. Special Envoy Steve Witkoff announced the transition to the second phase of this plan. Moreover, under the Board of Peace chaired by U.S. President Trump, various organizations related to the governance of Gaza were inaugurated, including the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, which is



An Israeli tank rolling in the north of the Gaza Strip (December 2023) [AFP-Jiji]

comprised of Palestinian technocrats.

On the other hand, regarding the disarmament of Hamas, which is included in the second phase, there are differing perceptions among the parties involved and the mediating countries and the progress on specific initiatives remains uncertain. It is necessary to continue monitoring closely.

(3) Conflict with Hezbollah

Since the beginning of the clashes between Israel and Palestinian militants in October 2023, attacks by Hezbollah involving rockets, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and missiles have intensified in northern Israel. The IDF has responded with airstrikes and other action against Hezbollah military bases, and many Hezbollah fighters and leaders, including Hassan Nasrallah, then secretary-general of the group, have been killed.

In addition, in September 2024, a lot of communication devices being used by Hezbollah fighters simultaneously exploded, and Israel admitted being involved. In October of the same year, the IDF launched a ground invasion of southern Lebanon, strengthening their offensive against Hezbollah. Later, in November 2024, thanks to the mediation efforts of the United States and France, Israel and the Lebanese government concluded a ceasefire agreement, which included the withdrawal of the IDF from southern Lebanon, including the border between Israel and Lebanon, as well as the disarming of Hezbollah forces in southern Lebanon.

However, even after February 18, 2025, the withdrawal deadline agreed to by the two countries, Israel insisted that the Lebanese government and Hezbollah still had not completely held up their end of the ceasefire agreement, and Israel continued to station forces at five locations in southern Lebanon. Moreover, following an attack from Lebanon in March of the same year, the IDF carried out frequent airstrikes against Hezbollah fighters and weapons arsenals in the vicinity of Beirut and in the south.

On the other hand, in August of the same year, the Lebanese government presented a policy of aiming for the disarmament of Hezbollah within the year, and on January 8, 2026, it announced that it had achieved the disarmament of Hezbollah south of the Litani River in southern Lebanon, which was the goal of phase one of the disarmament. However, while Israel acknowledges the Lebanese government's efforts to some extent, it considers them insufficient.

In this context, on March 2, 2026, Hezbollah launched a rocket attack against Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in an attack by the United States and Israel. In response to this, Israel commenced airstrikes and ground operations. Furthermore, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that Israel would carry out the disarmament of Hezbollah if the Lebanese government did not.

On April 8 of the same year, the United States and Iran announced a halt to the attacks, and subsequently, on April 16, Israel and Lebanon agreed to a ten-day ceasefire mediated by the United States. However, even after that, Israel has continued to station troops within Lebanon and has launched attacks against Lebanon, claiming that Hezbollah had violated the ceasefire agreement. Hezbollah has resumed attacks against Israel, and in May of the same year, the IDF bombed the southern part of Lebanon's capital city. Furthermore, on May 31, Prime Minister Netanyahu had reportedly ordered an expansion of ground operations in Lebanon.

(4) Conflict with the Houthis

From October 19, 2023, the Houthis intermittently launched missiles, UAVs, and other weapons toward Israel, claiming that they were acting in solidarity with the people. Israel intercepted most of these using Arrow and a range of other air defense assets. However, Israel also suffered damage as a result of failing to intercept some of these missiles and UAVs, and there were cases of fragments of intercepted missiles falling on the country. In addition, the Houthis attacked merchant ships off the coast of Yemen, sinking them and killing their crews.

In July 2024, as attacks by the Houthis continued, Israel started launching airstrikes against regions controlled by the Houthis, including Hudaydah Port in Yemen, and Israel carried out the same kinds of airstrikes in September and December of the same year and in January and from May to September in 2025.

After the ceasefire agreement going into effect in Gaza on January 19, 2025, the Houthis temporarily stopped attacking ships, but in response to Israel stopping the delivery of supplies to Gaza, the Houthis once again started attacking Israeli ships on March 11, 2025. Amid these developments, the United States had been conducting strikes against the Houthis as part of "powerful military action" since the 15th of that month. However, in May of that year, it was announced that the Houthis had agreed to cease attacks on U.S. naval vessels and other assets.

Subsequently, the Houthis continued their attacks against Israel, but after the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas on October 9 of the same year, no further attacks by the Houthis against the Israeli mainland or vessels associated with Israel were confirmed.[1]

However, amidst the exchanges of attacks between the United States and Israel on the one hand and Iran on the other that began on February 28, 2026, the Houthis issued a statement on March 28 of the same year, announcing that they had launched multiple ballistic missiles at Israeli military

1 In a letter to the Hamas military wing, the Houthis declared that they would resume military operations if Israel resumed attacks on Gaza, and it was believed that attacks on Israel had effectively ceased following the recent ceasefire.

targets and that they would continue military operations until aggression on all front lines ceases. After that, the Houthis subsequently continued to launch attacks against Israel.

See Section 11-2-2 (1) (Maritime Security in the Middle East)

(5) Conflict with Iran

On June 13, 2025, Israel launched an attack (Operation Rising Lion) targeting Iranian military facilities including nuclear facilities, ballistic missile launchers and storage facilities, and air defense systems, missile factories, several senior officials of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), including the Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, and nuclear scientists, citing the need to eliminate the Iranian threat. The attack targets were further expanded to include some energy facilities and government agencies, and on June 16, Israel announced that it had gained air superiority in the skies over Tehran.

In response to these attacks, Iran retaliated with UAVs and ballistic missile strikes. It is reported that Israel, with the support of the United States and multilayered air defense systems, intercepted most of the drones and ballistic missiles launched by Iran, but some of the missiles landed on Israeli territory, resulting in Israeli casualties.

In this context, on June 22, the U.S. Forces attacked three of Iran's nuclear facilities (Operation Midnight Hammer). It was reported that over 125 aircraft, including B-2 strategic bombers, and submarines participated in this attack. It was also the first combat deployment of GBU-57s, large bunker-buster bombs with high penetrating ability, which were used to attack nuclear facilities constructed deep underground.

In response to this, on June 23, Iran launched ballistic missiles at a U.S. Air Force base in Qatar, and the U.S. Forces intercepted the missiles. On the same day, U.S. President Trump announced that Israel and Iran had agreed to a "complete and total" ceasefire.

On February 28, 2026, Israel launched attacks on Iran together with the United States (Operation Roaring Lion and Operation Epic Fury). According to the United States, senior Iranian military and government officials, including Supreme Leader Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, were successively killed as a result of these operations. The United States also stated that the operations destroyed most of Iran's air defense systems and naval vessels, and attacked unmanned assets, nuclear-related industrial infrastructure, and the like.

In response to this, Iran fought back with ballistic missile and UAV attacks against Israel and the Gulf states in which U.S. Forces bases are located, resulting in numerous casualties and significant damage to military assets for both the United States and Israel and in addition the Gulf states as well.

On April 8 of the same year, the United States and Iran announced that they had agreed to a two-week ceasefire, and Israel expressed its support for this decision by the United States. On April 11, delegations from both the United States and Iran held talks in Pakistan aimed at ending the fighting, but no agreement was reached. Thereafter, even as the exchanges of attacks between both sides continued, the United States and Iran continued negotiations toward an agreement, with Pakistan and other acting as intermediaries. On June 15, the United States and Iran announced that they reached an agreement on a memorandum of understanding concerning the cessation of hostilities and other matters. On June 18, President Trump and Iranian President Pezeshkian, together with Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif in his capacity as mediator, signed the memorandum.

See Section 1-1 (The United States (General Situation))



Smoke and flames rising up after a bombing in Tehran, the capital of Iran (March 2026) [EPA-Jiji]

(6) Military Cooperation with Other Countries

Israel has a "special relationship" with the United States. More specifically, Israel has been receiving military support from the United States since the 1960s, and this support currently amounts to around USD 3.8 billion every year.

Immediately after Israel started clashing with Palestinian militants in October 2023, the United States announced the deployment of a carrier strike group to the Middle East. In addition, in line with subsequent changes in the situation, the United States has deployed additional assets to the Middle East, including Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) missiles, a THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) air defense system, and F-22 fighter jets. U.S. destroyers deployed to the Middle East have also frequently intercepted missiles and other weapons launched at Israel by Iran and the Houthis.

In April and October 2024, when Iran launched missiles and UAVs toward Israel, they were intercepted by fighter jet units from not only the United States but also the United Kingdom and other countries.

3 Situation in Iran

(1) Military Affairs

In addition to the Islamic Republic of Iran Army and the Law Enforcement Command, Iran has the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which was established to defend the revolutionary regime. Unlike the Islamic Republic of Iran Army, which engages in symmetric (conventional) warfare, the main mission of the IRGC is to engage in asymmetric warfare. The IRGC also includes the Quds Force, which is responsible for overseas operations. It is believed that the IRGC extends Iran's influence in the corresponding regions by supporting pro-Iranian groups abroad.

According to a report published by the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency in 2019, Iran's military strategy is to develop military capabilities to respond to air attacks and ground invasions by the United States and other countries. The report also assessed that, Iran's deterrence is focused on the following three core capabilities: (1) ballistic missiles capable of long-range strikes, (2) naval capabilities to interfere with navigation in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, and (3) foreign covert operations conducted through pro-Iranian group abroad.

It has also been pointed out that Iran has been developing its ballistic missiles since the 1980s, and the country currently possesses both short-range and intermediate-range ballistic missiles. In 2023, the country also unveiled its hypersonic ballistic missiles. In addition, Iran's development of unmanned assets has also been especially striking, including unmanned assets for both offensive and reconnaissance purposes.

These missiles and UAVs have been used in the aforementioned attacks against Israel and the Gulf states in which U.S. Forces bases are located, and Iran is believed to have launched over 550 ballistic missiles and more than 1,000 UAVs during its retaliatory attacks against Israel in June 2025. It has been pointed out that although Iran's ballistic missile stockpile decreased to about 1,000 to 1,500 missiles due to attacks from Israel and Iran's retaliatory attacks, Iran's production increased to restore the stockpile to around 2,000 missiles, the same level as or greater than before the June 2025 attacks, by the time the attacks by the United States and Israel were launched against Iran in February 2026.

See Section 1-1 (The United States (General Situation))

(2) Military Cooperation with Other Countries

In March 2025, Iran, Russia, and China conducted the joint naval exercise "Maritime Security Belt 2025" in the northern Indian Ocean. This exercise has been held six times since 2019, including when China did not participate, and the number of observer countries increases every year.

4 Situation in Syria

In November 2024, anti-government forces led by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which is based in Idlib in northwestern Syria, launched an offensive against the Syrian Arab Armed Forces and seized control of the capital city of Damascus in December of the same year. Then President Assad fled to Russia, and the Assad regime collapsed. On December 10, a "transitional government" centered on the anti-government forces was inaugurated, and on January 29, 2025, Ahmed al-Sharaa, commander of HTS, took office as transitional president. The president has presented a policy of unifying all of Syria and working toward establishing sovereignty under a single state authority, but clashes with armed groups and former regime supporters have occurred in various regions. For example, in March of the same year, an agreement was reached with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to integrate SDF-controlled regions into the government, but clashes continued repeatedly. On the other hand, progress toward unification has also been seen. For example, in January 2026, an agreement was reached to hand over two of the three northern governorates controlled by the SDF to the government.

Furthermore, on October 5, 2025, the Syrian government held the first parliamentary elections since the collapse of the Assad regime, but elections were held only in the 11 of 14 governorates under Syrian government control; the holding of the elections in the remaining three governorates was postponed due to security concerns, among other reasons.

5 Situation in Yemen

In Yemen, in September 2014, as the Houthis invaded the Yemeni capital of Sanaa and other locations, the president requested support from Arab countries. In response, in March 2015, coalition forces led by Saudi Arabia began air strikes against the Houthis. In response, the Houthis also launched attacks on the mainland of Saudi Arabia with ballistic missiles and the like, and also began using unmanned assets and cruise missiles.

In November 2019, the Yemeni government and the Southern Transitional Council (STC) seeking secession and independence in southern Yemen, signed the Riyadh Agreement[2] in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, and then the new cabinet was established based on this agreement in December 2020. President Hadi newly established the "Presidential Leadership Council," and announced that he would transfer all of his authority in April 2022. The council consists of delegates of all the major political powers in Yemen, except the Houthis, and aims to strengthen the governance of the government and conclude negotiations

2 As conflicts continued between the Yemeni government and the STC, which seeks autonomy for the southern part of the country, the Riyadh Agreement stipulated the establishment of a new cabinet, including ministers from the STC, to end the conflict between the two sides.

with the Houthis. In the same month, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen announced that the parties to the armed conflict agreed on a two-month ceasefire throughout Yemen. Although this agreement expired in October of the same year, a lull in attacks within Yemen continued thereafter.

In this context, in December 2025, the STC, which is thought to be receiving support from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), launched a military operation and announced that it had gained control of all of southern Yemen. In response, Saudi Arabia, acting at the request of the Yemeni government, provided airstrikes and other support to the operation by the Yemeni government's military to recapture territory controlled by the STC. Saudi Arabia also called on the UAE, in light of requests from the Yemeni government, to withdraw its forces stationed in Yemen. Subsequently, the UAE announced the withdrawal of its forces from Yemen.

Following the abovementioned developments, the Yemeni government announced that it had recaptured the territory that was controlled by the STC and completely gained control of southern Yemen by January 2026. The Saudi-led coalition claimed that Chairman Aidarous al-Zubaidi, the leader of the STC, fled to the UAE. However, unrest subsequently continued in some regions of southern Yemen, including the interim capital Aden, with activity by STC remnants and demonstrations supporting that organization.

6 Situation in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM) started providing education, training, and advice for the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) in the wake of the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which had formerly maintained public security in the country, in December 2014. Meanwhile, the ANDSF faces challenges regarding logistics, morale, air capabilities, and troop-commander leadership, allowing the Taliban to expand their control in Afghanistan.

In February 2020, an agreement was signed between the United States and the Taliban that included the conditional phase-out of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan. In March 2020, the United States announced that it had begun the withdrawal of its forces, and this was finished by the end of August 2021. In this situation, the Taliban expanded their ruled area quickly and in August 2021, they brought the capital city Kabul under their control. In September the same year, they announced the establishment of a caretaker cabinet.

Since the inauguration of the Taliban "caretaker government" in 2021, incidents of mutual attacks on each other's territories have occurred between Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan, and in October 2025, exchanges of attacks occurred centered on their border region. Going forward, the Taliban's domestic governance and its relations with other countries will continue to be closely watched.

2 Africa

1 Challenges Facing African Countries

Africa has 54 countries, with a population of around 1.5 billion people, representing a young, energetic, and highly potential region that is expected to account for one-quarter of the world's population by 2050. Africa boasts a wealth of mineral resources and a high economic growth rate. The region is therefore important in terms of both the economic security of Japan and securing a value chain, and there is increasing interest from around the world in exploring further investments in Africa. On the other hand, the region faces many security challenges, including armed conflicts, terrorism, political turmoil, and piracy. To achieve peace and stability in Africa, there are UN PKOs underway as well as proactive efforts by the African Union (AU) and other regional institutions.

In Sudan, the national army clashed with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group, in April 2023 over the integration of the RSF into the national army and other issues, leading to an armed conflict. Since May of the same year, there have been efforts by the United States, Saudi Arabia, the AU, and other parties to mediate a ceasefire, but no effective ceasefire has been agreed to, and heavy fighting continues.

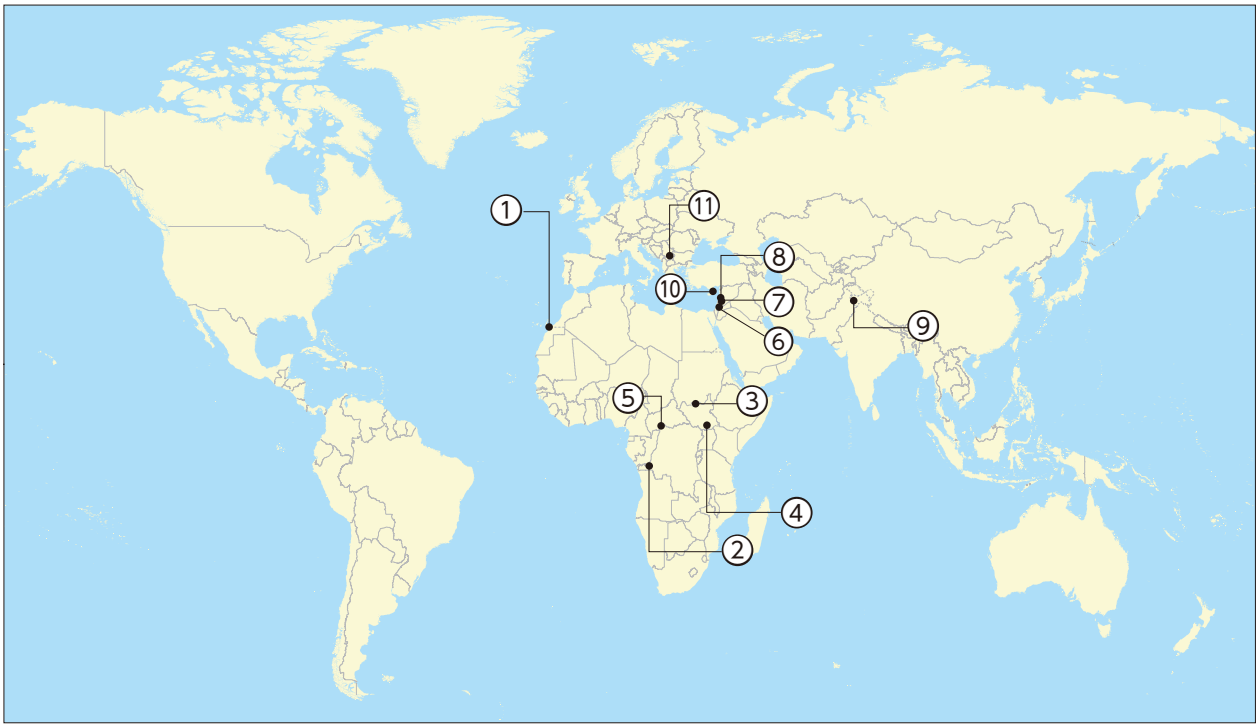
Since its independence from Sudan in 2011, South Sudan has experienced large-scale armed conflicts stemming from political and ethnic divisions and other factors. However, in September 2018, the parties to the conflict, including President Kiir and then Vice President Machar, signed the "Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS)," a peace agreement that set out a roadmap toward the establishment of a unified government. In 2020, the Transitional Government of National Unity was established, and the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) has been supporting the implementation of the R-ARCSS. However, progress in implementing the R-ARCSS remains limited. In September 2024, the parties to the R-ARCSS agreed to postpone the general election until December 2026 and extend the term of the Transitional Government until February 2027. In March 2025, clashes occurred primarily in Upper Nile State between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF), loyal to President Kiir, and the White Army, an armed youth group believed to be affiliated with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – in Opposition (SPLM-IO), which supports First Vice President Machar. Furthermore, in September of the

same year, First Vice President Machar was charged with treason in connection with the clashes. Political tensions and sporadic armed clashes continue in local areas of the country, and the situation remains fragile and unstable.

In recent years, West Africa has seen a series of military takeovers. More specifically, some members of the national armies of various countries have been responsible for such takeovers, including Mali in August 2020 and May 2021, Burkina Faso in January and September 2022, Niger in July 2023, and Guinea-Bissau in November 2025. The U.S. Armed Forces, French Armed Forces, United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and other organizations have withdrawn from these areas, and deteriorating public security has become a serious problem including frequent acts of terrorism and attacks by Islamic extremists and other groups.

See Fig. I-3-10-1 (Current UN Peacekeeping Operations), Section 11-1-2 (Trends of Activities in Africa), Section 11-2-2 (2) (Piracy), Part III, Chapter 3, Section 3-2-2 (United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS))

Fig. I-3-10-1 Current UN Peacekeeping Operations



(Note) According to the United Nations (as of March 2026).

Africa

	Mission	Date Established
①	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)	Apr. 1991
②	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)	Jul. 2010
③	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)	Jun. 2011
④	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)	Jul. 2011
⑤	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)	Apr. 2014

Middle East

	Mission	Date Established
⑥	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)	May 1948
⑦	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)	May 1974
⑧	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)	Mar. 1978

Asia

	Mission	Date Established
⑨	United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)	Jan. 1949

Europe

	Mission	Date Established
⑩	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)	Mar. 1964
⑪	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)	Jun. 1999

2 Relations between African Countries and Other Countries

In terms of security, African countries have long and deep relationships with the United States, Europe, and Russia. Based on this, the relationship with Russia has been further deepening recently, and Chinese involvement in Africa has become prominent.

(1) China and Russia

China has been strengthening its economic ties with African countries for a long time, but in recent years, it has also increased its military involvement in the region. This includes intensive interactions among not only state leaders but also senior military officials as well as active arms exports and exchanges between military forces. China also actively dispatches personnel to undertake UN PKO in Africa. Some suspect that underlying these movements could be China's aim to ensure a stable supply of natural resources and to secure additional overseas bases in the future.

For example, in August 2017, China began to operate its first overseas military base in Djibouti, known as a "support base," to provide logistical support to its military, and in July and October 2024, and April and October 2025, Chinese troops stationed at the "support base" conducted joint exercises with the Djibouti Armed Forces troops. There have also been activities in African coastal countries. On the west coast of Africa, from June to July 2023, Chinese naval counter-piracy units visited the Gulf of Guinea countries and conducted joint exercises. On the east coast as well, from July to August 2024, a two-week-long joint exercise was conducted along with Tanzania and Mozambique. Moreover, China conducted trilateral joint exercises with Russia and South Africa in November 2019 and February 2023, and in January 2026, it conducted a joint military exercise with South Africa, Russia, the UAE, and other countries off the coast of South Africa.

It has been pointed out that China might be considering the construction of additional Chinese military-related facilities in African coastal countries in particular,[3] and China is expected to continue expanding its military presence in Africa.

In recent years, Russia has actively exported arms to African countries and further enhanced its involvement through the activities of private military companies. Even after the Wagner Group's armed rebellion in 2023 and the death of one of its founders, Prigozhin, Russia is believed to be maintaining significant influence in Africa. Since 2024, there have been reports of activities by the Africa Corps, established under Russia's Ministry of Defence in a form which partially incorporated the Wagner Group.

In 2020, the Russian government announced an agreement with the government of Sudan to open a Russian naval base on the Red Sea in Sudan. In February 2025, the Sudanese government announced that the two countries had reached a final agreement, and in December of the same year, it was reported that the Sudanese government had presented a 25-year naval base contract to Russia. If a base of the Russian Navy has been established in Sudan, it is believed that the deployment capabilities of the AFRF will be improved in the direction of the Indian Ocean.

Russia is expected to continue expanding its military presence in Africa, especially in countries where military takeovers have occurred or countries with unstable situations.

(2) The United States and Europe

The United States has pursued military cooperation with African countries through the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) in particular, including multilateral joint exercises, stationing and training missions, the dispatching of personnel for counterterrorism operations, and arms exports.

Since the inauguration of the second Trump administration, AFRICOM has identified countermeasures against terrorists, including measures against terrorists such as Islamic extremists that could potentially attack the U.S. Homeland in particular, as a U.S. priority in Africa. The National Defense Strategy (NDS), published in January 2026, also declares a policy regarding Africa that "we will stand ready to take direct action against Islamic terrorists who are both capable of and intent on striking the U.S. Homeland, including in close coordination with interagency and foreign partners. We will simultaneously seek to empower allies and partners to lead efforts to degrade and destroy other terrorist organizations."

In addition, in a document submitted to Congress in May 2026, AFRICOM stated that the Chinese military's ability to operate from a dual-use base on the West coast of Africa would significantly complicate the United States' security posture and be a direct threat to the U.S. Homeland.

In order to counter these threats, the United States is expected to continue its involvement in African affairs.

Europe has also pursued military cooperation with African countries, including stationing and training missions as well as the dispatching of personnel for counterterrorism operations. However, in recent years, some suggest that Europe's influence has decreased compared to China and Russia, which are expanding their influence.

In particular, France has an especially deep relationship with African countries for historical reasons and has maintained its influence mainly in its former colonies. However, in recent years, the withdrawal of French troops based in West African countries has been occurring one after another, against the backdrop of military takeovers, growing anti-French sentiment, and the expanding influence of Russia.

More recently, in November 2024, Chad, which has a friendly relationship with France, announced the end of its defense cooperation agreement with the country, and in

3 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. Department of War (2025)

January 2025, the French Armed Forces completed their withdrawal from Chad. In addition, in February of the same year, the French military base in Côte d'Ivoire was returned, but 80 members of the French Armed Forces remained in the country to continue training Ivorian forces. Moreover, in March of the same year, the French Armed Forces commenced their withdrawal from Senegal as well, and in July of the same year, they officially returned their last military base remaining in Senegal. Due to this, the only permanent military base the French Armed Forces possess in Africa now is in Djibouti.

Given these circumstances, France is currently working to rebuild its military posture and deepen its partnerships in the African region, and European involvement in stabilizing the region is expected to continue.

Section 11 Other Initiatives

1 Trends in International Terrorism

1 General Situation

There are prominent cases where power vacuums in some countries with weak governance in the Middle East and Africa have become a hotbed for activities of international terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). These kinds of terrorist organizations have instigated fighters to conduct terrorist attacks at their home and abroad, and are also spreading violent extremism via Internet or other means. As a result, particularly, terrorist attacks planned and committed by individuals or small groups of people who have no official relations with international terrorist organizations but have become influenced by them in some ways, have occurred in Western and other countries. Moreover, terrorist attacks targeting certain religions or races in a right-wing extremist political context have also occurred in Western countries.

Among international terrorist organizations, ISIL established multiple "provinces" outside of their original base in Iraq and Syria as "Islamic State" territories, and these "provinces" have been conducting terrorist acts in various places. In March 2024, ISIL claimed responsibility for an act of terrorism committed at a concert hall in the suburbs of Moscow, where over 140 people were shot and killed.

Concerning international counterterrorism measures, international cooperation has grown even more important as terrorism threats have diffused and deepened on the diversification of terrorist attacks and the improvement of terrorist groups' attack capabilities.

2 Trends of Activities in Africa

Organizations related to ISIL and/or Al-Qaeda are active in Africa. In particular, the Sahel region, including Mali, remains a hotbed of international terrorism, with approximately 50% of the global deaths from terrorism in 2024 occurring in the region. Furthermore, in central and southern Africa, ISIL's "Central Africa Province" had been active since June 2019, mainly in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and northern Mozambique. In May 2022, an armed group in Mozambique that had previously issued a statement of criminal activity under the name of ISIL's "Central Africa Province" made a criminal declaration under the name of ISIL's "Mozambique Province" and began operating as a new branch of ISIL. In eastern Africa, Al-Shabaab is repeatedly carrying out terrorist attacks, including suicide bombings, in Somalia.

European and other countries have engaged in counterterrorism operations and training missions aimed at responding to such terrorist organizations' actions. For instance, in the Sahel region, the French military took the lead in conducting counterterrorism operations against Islamic extremists from 2013 to 2022. In Mozambique, neighboring countries have responded to ISIL's "Mozambique Province" activities by dispatching forces and jointly conducting counterterrorism operations, while the EU continues to conduct training missions for the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces. Furthermore, in Somalia, the African Union launched a new mission in January 2025, providing assistance focused on strengthening counterterrorism and stabilizing security.

3 Trends of Activities in the Middle East

Since 2013, ISIL had become powerful by taking advantage of the unstable situation in Iraq and Syria, and unilaterally declared the establishment of the "Islamic State" in 2014. From that year, the U.S.-led coalition forces conducted airstrikes and education/training missions for local groups in Iraq and Syria. In 2019, the United States announced that it and the coalition forces had liberated 100% of ISIL-controlled areas in the two countries. Although the United States announced the deaths of ISIL's leaders in February and November 2022, ISIL announced the appointment of new leaders in March and November 2022, respectively, and is believed to still be active in Iraq and Syria. Under these circumstances, the U.S. Forces have been continuously stationed in both countries as part of efforts to prevent the resurgence of ISIL. Most recently, there was an attack in Syria by a person believed to be an ISIL fighter that killed three people including U.S. military personnel in December 2025, and the U.S. Central Command conducted airstrikes across Syria in that month and again in January 2026. In the December 2025 airstrikes, more than 70 targets were attacked using over 100 precision-guided weapons and more than 20 fighter jets.

In Afghanistan, while the Taliban are expanding their controlled area, ISIL's "Khorasan Province" has been continuously conducting terrorist attacks mainly in the capital city of Kabul and eastern Afghanistan since 2015. When the Taliban, which is in a cooperative relationship with Al-Qaeda, took control of Kabul in August 2021, the United States completed the withdrawal of U.S. Forces but declared it would continue counterterrorism operations from afar.

Even after the withdrawal of U.S. Forces, ISIL's "Khorasan Province" has actively continued terrorist attacks in Kabul and other areas. It also uses its advanced public relations capabilities for activities such as spreading propaganda in various regions, expanding beyond Afghanistan to Pakistan, Russia, and Central Asia as well, thereby threatening the international community.

2 Maritime Trends

Japan is a maritime nation surrounded by sea and depends on maritime transportation for importing energy resources. In this sense, securing maritime traffic safety is vital for the nation's existence. At the same time, ensuring the stable use of the maritime domain as infrastructure supporting international logistics is recognized as a primary concern for the international community.

Nevertheless, some countries unilaterally claim their rights or take action based on their own assertions that are incompatible with the existing international order, creating situations where the principle of the freedom of the high seas is unjustly violated. Attacks on ships in the Middle East and piracy seen at various locations have become a threat to maritime traffic. In addition, in recent years, new maritime challenges have emerged, including increasing military activities in the Arctic as well as incidents involving damage to submarine cables in the Baltic Sea and the waters surrounding Taiwan.

1 Trends Related to the "Principle of the Freedom of the High Seas," etc.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)[1] provides for the principles of freedom of navigation on the high seas and freedom of overflight. Nevertheless, in the waters and airspace surrounding Japan, especially in the East and South China Seas, it has become increasingly common for China to unilaterally assert its rights or take action based on assertions that are incompatible with the existing international order, creating situations where these principles are unjustly violated. In addition, North Korea's repeated launches of ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean, as well as launches using ballistic missile technology for the purpose of a satellite launch, not only violate related United Nations Security Council resolutions but are also problematic from the perspective of ensuring the safety of aircraft and ships. They also threaten the peace and security of Japan, the surrounding region, and the international community.

See Chapter 3, Section 2-2-6 (Maritime and Airspace Activities), Chapter 3, Section 4-1-3 (WMD and Missiles)

Despite these numerous acts that could pose risks to securing the stable use of oceans and airspace, in recent years progress has been made in efforts to avert and prevent unintended consequences in the seas and skies.

As for multilateral initiatives, navies of countries participating in the Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) adopted the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES).[2] CUES sets forth a code of conduct, such as procedures and communication methods, for ensuring safety in the event of unexpected encounters by vessels or aircraft of the navies of these countries. In addition, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China are continuing to hold official talks aimed at formulating the Code of the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (COC).

It is strongly hoped that these initiatives designed to avert and prevent unintended consequences in the seas and skies will supplement the existing international order and that the countries concerned, including China, refrain from unilateral actions that add to tension and act on the basis of the principle of the rule of law.

See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-14 (China)

2 National Maritime Security Initiatives

(1) Maritime Security in the Middle East

Since May 2019, sporadic events affecting the navigation safety of civilian vessels have occurred in the waters of the Middle East.

Given this situation, countries continue to carry out efforts to safeguard maritime security in the region. For example, in July 2019, the United States proposed the Maritime Security Initiative and established the International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC). The IMSC has 12 member states, including the United States (as of March 2026).

After the clashes between Israel and Palestinian militants started in October 2023, the Houthis, claiming that they were acting in solidarity with the people of Gaza, started attacking civilian ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden in November 2023. On November 19, a Japanese ship was also seized. Note that the members of this ship's crew were released in January 2025.

1 The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was adopted as a comprehensive treaty on the law and order of the seas in 1982 and entered into force in 1994 (Japan signed it in 1996).

2 This code is not legally binding and does not supersede the annexes of the Convention on International Civil Aviation and other international treaties.

In response to such events, in December 2023, the United States announced the launch of Operation Prosperity Guardian (OPG) to conduct patrols in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. OPG is a multinational security operation under Combined Task Force 153, the mission of which is to conduct maritime security and capacity building activities from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. Furthermore, in February 2024, the EU launched Operation Aspides, a defensive maritime security operation aimed at protecting ships from being attacked.

Although no attacks on ships by the Houthis have been confirmed since the October 2025 ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, Japan still needs to continue to pay close attention to trends surrounding the situation in the Middle East.

See Chapter 3, Section 10 (Middle East and Africa)

(2) Piracy

Piracy seen at various locations has become a threat to maritime traffic. The number of piracy and armed robbery incidents at sea (hereinafter "piracy incidents") around the world[3] has declined in recent years after peaking at 445 incidents in 2010. (There were 137 incidents in 2025.)

The decline has depended heavily on the fall in the number of piracy incidents in waters off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. The number of piracy incidents in waters off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden increased sharply from 2008, reaching 237 incidents in 2011, accounting for more than half of the total number of piracy incidents worldwide and attracting great international concern as a threat to safe navigation. In recent years, the number of piracy incidents in waters off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden has remained low compared to the peak as a result of various initiatives taken by the international community, including Japan. However, according to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), one hijacking incident occurred in December 2023, the first since 2017. Later on, three more hijacking incidents occurred in 2024 followed by an additional three incidents in 2025, and the situation remains a matter of concern. The root causes of piracy, such as Somalia's unstable internal security and poverty, remain unresolved, and the threat posed by piracy still exists. Given the current situation, unless the international community further strengthens its ongoing efforts, there is a risk that acts of piracy will intensify even more.

See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 1-2-7 (Efforts to Ensure the Stable Use of Sea Lines of Communication)

International counter-piracy initiatives in waters off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden include counter-piracy operations, such as zone defense operations, by Combined Task Force 151 (CTF151), a multinational force that was created by the U.S. Force-led Combined Maritime Force (CMF)[4] based in Bahrain. The European Union (EU) for its part has conducted Operation Atalanta to counter piracy since December 2008. During this operation, naval vessels and aircraft dispatched by EU member countries escort ships and monitor the waters off the coast of Somalia. It has been decided that the operation will continue until the end of February 2027.

Meanwhile, in Africa, piracy incidents occurred in the Gulf of Guinea (the number of incidents was 24 in 2025). The international community has continued counter-piracy initiatives in Africa.

The number of piracy incidents in Southeast Asian waters came to 95 in 2025. In particular, piracy incidents in the Singapore Strait have been increasing since 2019, with 80 incidents in 2025, an increase compared to the 43 incidents in 2024. Although many of these incidents are minor, such as theft of equipment, they account for approximately 60% of all piracy incidents reported worldwide.

3 Trends in the Arctic Ocean and the Arctic Region

In recent years, moves toward the utilization of the Northern Sea Route and the development of natural resources in the Arctic Ocean have gained momentum in line with a decline in sea ice. The eight arctic nations consisting of Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States established the Arctic Council in 1996 to promote cooperation for common challenges such as sustainable development and environment protection.[5]

3 The numbers of piracy incidents cited in the main text are based on a report by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). The number includes attempted cases.

4 The CMF is a multinational force that operates for the purpose of promoting maritime security, stability, and prosperity under the U.S. Central Command. Forces from 47 countries participate in the CMF (as of March 2026), and the Commander of the U.S. Fifth Fleet concurrently serves as the CMF Commander. The CMF is comprised of five combined task forces: Combined Task Force 150, which is tasked with maritime security operations in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Oman; Combined Task Force 151, which is tasked with counter-piracy operations; Combined Task Force 152, which is tasked with maritime security operations in the Persian Gulf; Combined Task Force 153, which is tasked with maritime security and capacity building operations from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden; and Combined Task Force 154, which is tasked with education and training for maritime security (established in May 2023). A Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) unit participated in Combined Task Force 151.

5 Russia was supposed to be the chair country of the Arctic Council for two years from May 2021. However, in March 2022, the remaining seven Arctic region countries stated that they would stop participating in all the meetings of the Council with Russia as the chair country because of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Norway assumed the chairmanship in May 2023, and the Council resumed its activities. Later, in May 2025, Denmark assumed the chairmanship.

From the perspective of security, the Arctic Ocean has traditionally been used for the deployment of strategic nuclear forces and as their transit route. With the decrease in sea ice in recent years, ships have been able to navigate for a longer period of time and more extensively than before. It has therefore been considered that the region could be used for deploying maritime forces or maneuvering military forces using military maritime transport capabilities in future. In this situation, moves to deploy new military capabilities in the ocean have been observed.

Russia's maritime doctrine, announced in July 2022, positioned the Arctic Ocean as an area of vital importance. Russia is promoting efforts to establish a system to protect its national interests in the Arctic region. Its various policy documents clearly state Russia's interests and the role of the Russian military in the Arctic. Furthermore, Russia is proceeding to develop a radar surveillance network as well as reconstructing airfields and deploying surface-to-air and surface-to-ship missiles along the Arctic coast. Note that Russia possesses more icebreakers than any other country in the world and is also the only country to have operational nuclear-powered icebreakers. In terms of activities, the Northern Fleet has been conducting annual Arctic expeditions as part of its training since 2012.[6]

See Chapter 3, Section 5-3-5 (Trends Related to the AFRF (General))

Moving on to the United States, in addition to its military bases in Alaska, it also has a base in Greenland called Pituffik Space Base (called Thule Air Base until April 2023). Under the country's 2024 Arctic Strategy, which was announced in July 2024, the United States, in cooperation with its allies and partners, will pursue an end state that preserves the Arctic as a stable region in which the U.S. homeland remains secure and vital national interests are safeguarded. President Trump also expressed the view that the United States should possess Greenland, an autonomous territory of Denmark, due to security considerations in the Arctic region. In terms of activities, in March 2024, the United States conducted Operation Ice Camp 2024 (formerly called "ICEX"), an exercise related to the operation of submarines in the Arctic, which included participation by the Royal Canadian Navy and Air Force, the French Navy, the U.K. Royal Navy, and the Royal Australian Navy. In addition, the United States has announced a plan to build new icebreakers in cooperation with Canada and Finland.

Aside from coastal states in the Arctic Ocean, 13 countries including Japan, China, the Republic of Korea (ROK), the United Kingdom, Germany, and France, have observer status in the Arctic Council. China shows a stance to be proactively involved in the Arctic Ocean. It has been pointed out that China could take advantage of scientific survey and commercial activities[7] to increase its presence, including military activities in the Arctic Ocean.[8]

In addition, cooperation between China and Russia in the Arctic Ocean is increasing. According to a joint statement issued following a China-Russia summit meeting in May 2024, the two countries intend to deepen their cooperation related to the Northern Sea Route. Later, in July 2024, four Chinese and Russian bombers participated in a joint flight over the Chukchi Sea, the Bering Sea, and the northern Pacific Ocean. In addition, from September to October 2024, the China Coast Guard and the Border Service of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation deployed ships on joint navigations from the Sea of Japan to the Arctic Ocean. Furthermore, according to a joint statement signed by China and Russia at the 30th regular meeting of the heads of their governments, which was held in November 2025, the countries confirmed their commitment to creating polar ships and related technologies, developing human resources related to operating vessels on the Northern Sea Route, and increasing the volume of cargo transported on such routes. The two countries are promoting cooperation on the Northern Sea Route in particular. According to the 2024 Arctic Strategy announced by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), by promoting cooperation with Russia, China could open the door to furthering its presence in the Arctic. In addition, while significant areas of disagreement between China and Russia remain, their growing alignment in the region is of concern, and military cooperation between them, including joint exercises in the Arctic, continues to increase.

At the same time, various European countries have launched their own initiatives in the Arctic as well. In 2025, to respond to the increasingly challenging security situation, Denmark, of which Greenland is an autonomous territory, announced plans to enhance its presence and defensive capabilities in the Arctic and northern Atlantic, including the acquisition of long-range drones and new patrol boats aimed at enhancing the country's monitoring capabilities. In terms of activities, in September 2025, the Danish Defence

6 According to the 2024 Arctic Strategy announced by the U.S. DoD, Russia is said to have the most developed military presence among Arctic nations. The strategy points out that Russia has a clear avenue of approach to the U.S. homeland through the Arctic and could use its Arctic-based capabilities to threaten the United States' ability to project power to both Europe and the Indo-Pacific region, thereby constraining its ability to respond to crises.

7 In terms of trends in recent years, in September 2025, China announced that it had successfully completed its first-ever investigation of the Arctic Ocean using a crewed submarine.

8 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2019) In addition, in INTELLIGENCE OUTLOOK 2025, which was published by the Danish Defence Intelligence Service (DDIS) in December 2025, it was pointed out that, within five to ten years, China is aiming to develop the ability to independently operate both surface ships and submarines in the Arctic Ocean.

implemented the exercise Arctic Light 2025, which included participation by France, Germany, Sweden, and Norway, and covered training such as the protection of critical infrastructure and drone operations in a polar environment. In January 2026, the Danish-led exercise Arctic Endurance began, which is an operation intended to demonstrate the country's military presence in the Arctic. The following North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) states are participating in the exercise, which the Danish Defence has announced will continue throughout 2026: France, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands, Iceland, and Belgium. In addition, in February 2026, NATO announced plans for Arctic Sentry, a new multi-domain mission intended to enhance the security of the Arctic.

See Chapter 3, Section 1 (The United States)

4 Trends in Undersea Infrastructure

In recent years, new maritime challenges have emerged, including incidents involving damage to submarine cables in the Baltic Sea and the waters surrounding Taiwan. In connection with such incidents, it has been pointed out that intentional destruction could constitute an element of hybrid warfare.

For example, in February 2023, submarine cables connecting the Matsu Islands to mainland Taiwan were cut, and Taiwanese authorities announced that it was believed to have been done by a Chinese fishing boat and cargo ship. In January 2025, submarine cables for international communication in the waters north of Taiwan were damaged, and, in February 2025, it was also announced that submarine cables connecting the main island of Taiwan to the Penghu Islands had been cut. As a result of this situation, in 2025, Taiwan enhanced its law enforcement and warning and surveillance efforts while also promoting legislation that included imposing stricter penalties for intentional damage. Meanwhile, in the Baltic Sea as well, a number of critical submarine cables have been damaged since November 2024 in particular. To enhance maritime presence and monitoring, NATO hosted a Summit of Baltic Sea Allies in January 2025, where the launch of a new military activity called "Baltic Sentry" was announced. In addition, in February 2025, the EU announced its EU Action Plan on Cable Security to ensure the resiliency of submarine cables.

Given that submarine cables are essential infrastructure for people's lives and economic activities, Japan must closely monitor any incidents related to submarine cables getting damaged.

See Chapter 3, Section 2-2-6 (Maritime and Airspace Activities)

3 Transfer and Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)

The transfer and proliferation of WMDs such as nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapons, as well as ballistic missiles that deliver such weapons, have been recognized as a significant threat since the end of the Cold War. In addition, as competition and confrontation among states have been sharpened and the international security environment has become complex and severe in recent years, there are concerns that the international community is presented with greater difficulties to rally together in taking on common challenges such as arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation.

1 Nuclear Weapons

During the period when the risk of a full-scale nuclear war between the United States and Soviet Union, including the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), was widely recognized, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) went into effect in 1970. The treaty prohibited manufacture and acquisition of nuclear weapons by countries other than those that had exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device in or before 1966 (the United States, the former Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France, and China). It was agreed that negotiations would be held in good faith regarding effective measures to reduce nuclear arsenals.

While the NPT has been concluded by a total of 191 countries and regions as of January 2026, some countries such as India, Israel, and Pakistan still refuse to participate as non-nuclear countries. In addition, North Korea, which has repeatedly conducted nuclear tests and declared its development and possession of nuclear weapons, added a provision to its constitution stating that it would "develop more advanced nuclear weapons" in September 2023. North Korea claims that it made the development and possession of nuclear capability a fundamental part of its national system.

Regarding nuclear capabilities of the United States and Russia, the two countries agreed on a five-year extension to the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) in January 2021, which would have made it effective until February 2026. However, as Russia continued its aggression against Ukraine while repeating words and actions that could be interpreted as threats to use nuclear weapons, Russia announced that it would unilaterally suspend the treaty's implementation in February 2023. In September 2025, Russia stated that it was prepared to maintain central quantitative limits on weapons regulated by the treaty for one year following February 2026 assuming the United States did so as well, but the treaty expired during the same month.

Until now, although the United States has expressed its

intention to pursue a framework of arms control with China included, China has repeatedly rejected any intention to be involved in such a framework. Meanwhile, China is said to continuously enhance its nuclear capability, and it has been pointed out that China remains on track to have over 1,000 warheads by 2030.[9]

As the post-Cold War international order has been seriously challenged amidst historical changes in the balance of power and intensifying geopolitical competition, the Government of Japan considers arms control and disarmament initiatives involving the United States, Russia, and China to be important and will therefore continue to cooperate closely with the United States on related action.

See Fig. I-3-11-1 (Number of Nuclear Warheads Arsenals and Their Major Means of Delivery by Country)

Fig. I-3-11-1 Number of Nuclear Warheads Arsenals and Their Major Means of Delivery by Country

		The United States	Russia	The United Kingdom	France	China
Missiles	ICBM (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles)	400 Minuteman III 400	328 SS-18 40 SS-19 12 SS-27 (single-warhead) 78 SS-27 (multi-warhead) 126 SS-27 (Yars-S, multi-warhead) 72	—	—	292 DF-5 (CSS-4) 18 DF-31 (CSS-10) 230 DF-41 44
	IRBM MRBM	—	SS-28 some	—	—	322 DF-26 250 DF-21A/E (CSS-5) 24 DF-17 (CSS-22) 48
	SLBM (Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles)	280 Trident D-5 280	208 SS-N-23 80 SS-N-32 128	64 Trident D-5 64	64 M-51 64	72 JL-2 (CSS-N-14)/ JL-3 (CSS-N-20) 72
Ballistic Missile Submarine Nuclear-Powered		14	13	4	4	6
Aircraft		65 B-2 19 B-52 46	63 Tu-95 (Bear) 51 Tu-160 (Blackjack) 12	—	40 Rafale 40	12 H-6N 12+
Number of warheads		3,700	4,309 (including 1,477 tactical nuclear warheads)	225	290	600

(Notes) 1 Data is based on "The Military Balance 2026," the SIPRI Yearbook 2025, etc.
2 For SLBMs, the figures represent the total number of SLBMs that can be carried by each country's nuclear-powered submarines.
3 The SIPRI Yearbook 2025 said that, as of January 2025, the United States deployed 1,770 nuclear warheads (including 100 tactical ones) and Russia deployed 1,718 warheads.
4 The Integrated Review by the UK in March 2021 stipulated that the UK will move to an overall nuclear weapon stockpile of no more than 260 warheads.
5 According to the SIPRI Yearbook 2025, the nuclear warhead inventories of India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea are 180, 170, 90, and around 50, respectively. Among others, North Korea retains fissionable materials enough to produce up to 90 warheads as a whole.

2 Biological and Chemical Weapons

Biological and chemical weapons are relatively inexpensive and easy to produce and disguise because many of the resources and technologies needed in their production are dual-use items. Therefore, development and/or acquisition by nations or terrorists seeking asymmetrical means for attack[10] is especially concerning. Furthermore, if those seeking biological and chemical weapons utilize emerging technologies such as big data and artificial Intelligence (AI), their ability to develop weapons will further increase.

Biological weapons have the following characteristics: (1) easy and inexpensive to produce; (2) there is usually an incubation period of a few days between exposure and onset of the symptom; (3) hard to detect their use; (4) even the threat of use can create great psychological effects; and (5) they can cause mass casualties and injuries depending on the circumstances of use and the type of weapon.

With regard to biological weapons, there has been speculation that North Korea and Russia have plans for offensive biological weapons that violate their obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).[11] In addition, it has been pointed out that in China, military medical institutions conducted toxin and biotechnology research and with potential biological weapons applications.[12]

Chemical weapons were used in such incidents as the sarin

9 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2025)
10 They refer to means of attack to strike an adversary's vulnerable points and are not conventional means. They include WMDs, ballistic missiles, terrorist attacks, and cyberattacks.
11 According to the "Biodefense Posture Review," U.S. DoD (2023)
12 According to "Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments," U.S. DoS (2025).

attack in the subway in Japan in 1995, which demonstrated the threat of terrorism using weapons of mass destruction in cities. Examples in recent years include the use of chemical weapons by the former Assad regime in Syria and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), as well as the attempted poisoning of Russian opposition leaders in which Novichok, a drug developed by Russia, was allegedly used. There have also been allegations that the Russian military used riot control agents during the fighting in Ukraine.

In addition, it has been pointed out that China is conducting research on substances such as agents which have utility for chemical weapons application, raising concerns about China's possible nonfulfillment of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).[13] Moreover, North Korea has not ratified the CWC and is said to still possess chemical weapons.

3 Ballistic Missiles and Other Missiles

Ballistic missiles are propelled by rockets for parabolic flights and are capable of attacking distant targets. They can be used as a means of delivering WMDs. As they fall at a steep angle and high speed, highly accurate systems are required for intercepting them effectively. Moreover, technologies related to ballistic missiles have been changing and developing quickly in recent years. For example, ballistic missiles flying at lower altitudes than typical ballistic missiles while following an irregular trajectory by controlling wings emerged and makes early detection and interception difficult.

See Fig. I-3-11-2 (Classification of Ballistic Missiles)

Fig. I-3-11-2 Classification of Ballistic Missiles

Category	Range
Short-Range Ballistic Missile, SRBM	Under approx. 1,000 km
Medium-Range Ballistic Missile, MRBM	Approx. 1,000 to under approx. 3,000 km
Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile, IRBM	Approx. 3,000 to under approx. 5,500 km
Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, ICBM	Approx. 5,500 km or more

(Note) Ballistic missiles launched from submarines are collectively referred to as submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), while a ballistic missile that has a precision guidance system on its warhead necessary to attack aircraft carriers and other vessels is called an anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM).

The deployment of ballistic missiles in areas with continuous armed conflicts is dangerous because it can intensify existing tensions and make the area unstable. Furthermore, ballistic missiles are used as a means of attacking from a distance or threatening another country that has superior conventional forces.

Along with the threat of ballistic missiles, the threat of cruise missiles is also pointed out as a weapon which is comparatively easy to acquire for non-state actors, and has the potential for proliferation. Because cruise missiles are cheaper to produce compared to ballistic missiles as well as easy to maintain and train with, many countries either produce or modify cruise missiles. Moreover, some cruise missiles have relatively higher target accuracy, are difficult to detect while cruising, and are able to approach the targets while concealed on a ship, therefore they will pose a serious threat when carrying WMDs with them.

4 Growing Concerns about Transfer and Proliferation of WMDs and Other Technologies

Even weapons that were purchased or developed for self-defense purposes could easily be exported or transferred once domestic manufacturing becomes successful. Some of these states that seek WMDs do not hesitate to put their land and people at risk, and furthermore, due to their weak governance, terrorist organizations are active in their territories. Therefore, it is conceivable that in general, the possibility of actual use of WMDs would increase.

The proliferation of WMDs and other related technologies has been noted in numerous instances. For example, it came to light in February 2004 that nuclear-related technologies, mainly uranium enrichment technology, had been transferred to North Korea, Iran, and Libya by Dr. A.Q. Khan and other scientists in Pakistan.

There has been significant transfer and proliferation of ballistic missiles that serve as means of weapon delivery as well. The former Soviet Union and other countries exported Scud-B to many countries and regions, including Iraq, North Korea, and Afghanistan. China and North Korea also exported DF-3 (CSS-2) and Scud missiles, respectively. As a result, a considerable number of countries and other actors now possess ballistic missiles.

North Korea is believed to have advanced its ballistic missile development with almost no test launches using various resources and technologies transferred from outside during the 1980s and 1990s. On the other hand, it is believed that North Korea continuously proliferates technologies, conventional weapons, and items used in the supply chains of WMDs to acquire foreign currencies and maintain foreign relations. For example, until now, North Korea has reportedly cooperated with Iran, Syria, Myanmar, Russia, and other countries in areas such as arms trading and weapon technology transfers.

It has been pointed out that, in recent years, states of particular concern have sustained their external transfer while skillfully averting international monitoring by falsifying documentation and diversifying transport routes to illicitly

13 According to the "Condition (10)(C) Report," U.S. DoS (2025).

export WMDs. Another concern has arisen that these states are also conducting intangible technology transfers. Specifically, these states have obtained advanced technologies that could be adapted for the development and manufacturing of WMDs and other technologies through their researchers and students dispatched to major companies and academic institutions in developed countries.

Chapter 4

Trends in New Ways of Warfare

Section 1

New Ways of Warfare Seen in Russia's Aggression against Ukraine and Related Challenges

1 General Situation

New ways of warfare and related challenges have emerged during Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

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. In addition, decision-making using artificial intelligence (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 being updated on an extremely short cycle.

Russia has also demonstrated a certain level of ability to absorb economic sanctions, and as the aggression drags on, the forces of both Russia and Ukraine are rapidly depleting their equipment and ammunition, which has resulted in both countries viewing the stable procurement of such resources as a key challenge. In this situation, the importance of ensuring sustained operational capability (SOC) has become clear, including by stockpiling equipment and ammunition even during peacetime and further enhancing the defense production and technological bases that underpin the development, production, and maintenance of equipment. At the same time, with the help of equipment provision and training support from NATO member states and other countries, Ukraine has been able to resist protracted aggression by Russia. Withstanding initial attacks and receiving effective support from allies, like-minded countries, and others are critical to ensuring SOC.

Drawing lessons from Russia's aggression against Ukraine, countries are accelerating efforts to adapt to new ways of warfare and prepare for lengthy wars. It is important to pay attention to future trends.

See Chapter 2 (Russia's Aggression and Ukraine's Defense)

2 New Ways of Warfare and Related Challenges

1 Mass Deployment and Expanded Use of Unmanned Assets

New ways of warfare that involve utilizing unmanned assets have emerged during Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Generally speaking, unmanned assets enable long-term operations in harsh environments while preserving manpower. As the battlefields of Ukraine transition to a war of attrition, unmanned assets are playing an important role in inflicting losses on adversary forces while minimizing casualties. Both Russia and Ukraine have been deploying a mass quantity of diverse, inexpensive unmanned assets, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), for a wide range of applications, such as searching for targets and attacking expensive equipment as well as basic infrastructure. In addition, UAVs are being used to launch large-scale coordinated attacks in combination with traditional shells and missiles.

(1) Mass Operation of Unmanned Assets

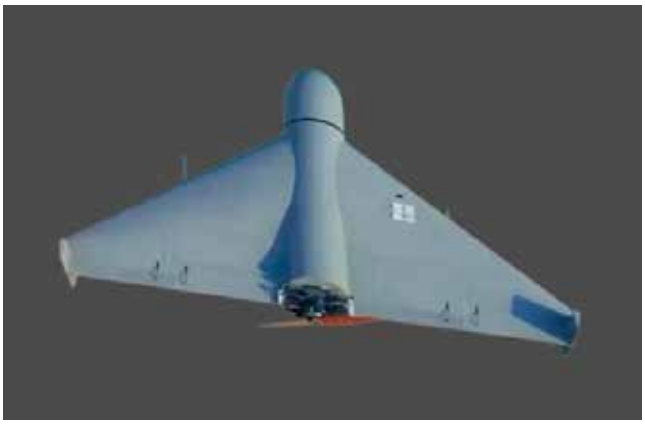
During its large-scale missile attacks against Ukraine, Russia has also been deploying a large number of one-way attack UAVs, including Shahed-type UAVs, capable of long-range flight to saturate Ukraine's air defense network, thereby increasing the probability of Russian missiles penetrating the air defense network. In addition, since around October 2024, Russia has also expanded its use of decoy UAVs that are difficult to distinguish from one-way attack UAVs. By employing a combination of such lower-cost UAVs that can be produced in large quantities, Russia has been launching effective long-range attacks against Ukraine.

On the other hand, it has been pointed out that it is necessary for Ukraine to destroy missile and UAV launch facilities, production plants, and other installations located in Russia, which are the source of the Russian attacks. In this regard, Ukraine is also using domestically produced UAVs

and other assets capable of long-range flight to frequently attack rear bases in Russia.



An apartment complex in Kharkiv that was destroyed by Russian UAVs [State Emergency Service of Ukraine]



Shahed-type UAV [Defence Intelligence of Ukraine]

(2) Expanded Applications of Unmanned Assets

On the battlefields of Ukraine, the applications of unmanned assets are rapidly expanding and currently include reconnaissance and observation as well as long-range attacks and precision attacks on the front line.

First of all, it has been pointed out that, by using a mass quantity of UAVs and other assets to conduct information gathering activities, both sides identify positions of hostile armored vehicles and infantry units, thereby increasing battlefield "transparency" and improving the situational awareness on the battlefield.

In addition to their use for reconnaissance and observation purposes, both Russia and Ukraine are also increasingly using first-person view (FPV) drones on the front line to attack armored vehicles, enemy fortifications, and individual soldiers.

In addition to large-scale attacks launched from national territory, there have also been examples of operations in which UAVs were employed from within enemy territory to maximize the element of surprise. For example, it has been reported that, in June 2025, Ukraine launched Operation "Spiderweb," which involved 117 UAVs concealed in wooden cabins disguised as cargo, transporting them into Russia, and then remotely controlling them to attack multiple bases in the country, thereby damaging dozens of strategic bombers and other aircraft. During the same month, the Security Service of Ukraine announced that Operation "Spiderweb" had resulted in estimated total damages to Russia of approximately USD 7 billion, showing that inexpensive approaches can be utilized to destroy expensive equipment.

Unmanned assets are also being effectively utilized offshore. By combining unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) with UAVs and missiles, Ukraine has been preventing Russian ships from approaching its coast and forcing them to withdraw, thereby limiting the activities of Russian ships. For example, according to the Defence Intelligence of Ukraine, by the end of May 2024, "Magura V5" USVs developed by Ukraine sank a total of eight ships belonging to Russia's Black Sea Fleet, including large landing ships and patrol boats. Similarly, in December 2024, improved "Magura V5" USVs shot down two Russian military helicopters, and in May 2025, "Magura V7" USVs used anti-air missiles to shoot down two Russian military fighter jets. Based on the above, USVs are apparently functioning as anti-aircraft assets. In addition, in December 2025, the Security Service of Ukraine announced that "Sub-Sea Baby" unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) had been used to attack a Russian military submarine, and future trends in the utilization of UUVs by Ukraine will be a subject of attention.



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



Operation "Spiderweb" [Security Service of Ukraine]



Ukrainian USV: "Magura V5" [Defence Intelligence of Ukraine]



Russian Navy ship apparently attacked by Ukrainian "Magura V5" USVs (March 2024) [Defence Intelligence of Ukraine]

2 Building Air Defense Capabilities against Complex Attacks

As a result of the Ukrainian military taking measures that included dispersing the placement of its assets, Ukraine maintained the majority of its air and air defense military capabilities in spite of attacks by the Russian military during the early stages of the war, which prevented Russia from attaining air superiority and apparently restricted the operations of the Russian Air Force to a certain extent.

Meanwhile, large-scale coordinated attacks by Russia combining UAVs and missiles continue to put enormous pressure on the air defense capabilities of the Ukrainian military. In fact, in December 2025, the Ukrainian Air Force announced that they intercepted approximately 9,600 Russian UAVs and approximately 120 Russian missiles in November 2025 alone.

To respond to such large-scale attacks, Ukraine has accepted equipment from Western countries and other benefactors and has been continuing to build up air defense capabilities that are not solely dependent on expensive conventional interceptor missiles. Ukraine has employed a multi-layered air defense approach that integrates a broad spectrum of assets, ranging from surface-to-air missiles of various ranges including man-portable air defense systems, to anti-aircraft guns, machine guns, interceptor UAVs, and electronic warfare systems.[1]



Surface-to-air missile system: "NASAMS (National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System)" [EPA-Jiji]



Man-portable anti-air missile: "Stinger" [AFP-Jiji]



Interceptor UAV: "Octopus" [Ministry of Defence of Ukraine]

1 According to the Government of Ukraine, in March 2026, in response to UAV attacks against the Gulf states by Iran, Ukraine dispatched over 200 military experts to Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Jordan to provide support related to building an air defense system, including advice and demonstrations.

3 Network Integration and Use of Data and AI

The Ukrainian military uses the situational awareness system "Delta" and other systems to connect front line units, unmanned assets, satellites, and other assets via a network and then uses AI to process and analyze the massive amount of data collected as a result. The military then instantly shares the results with each unit to facilitate prompt and accurate decision-making. As an example application, if target information is entered into this system, it is automatically uploaded to "Delta" to implement effective firepower control, including optimal firepower allocation.

In addition to the use of AI to accelerate decision-making as described above, it has been reported that both Russia and Ukraine are focusing on the development of UAVs equipped with AI. It has been noted that the autonomous control of UAVs through the use of AI could enable attacks to be carried out even under electronic jamming. As such, future developments in this area warrant close attention.



Using the situational awareness system "Delta" [Ministry of Defence of Ukraine]

4 Space, Cyber, and Electromagnetic Domains, and Information Warfare

(1) Space Domain

Ever since the beginning of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Ukraine has suffered the destruction of domestic base stations, radio towers, and other elements of its telecommunications infrastructure due to attacks by the Russian military. However, the Ukrainian military has been able to maintain Ukraine's telecommunications systems by utilizing the satellite constellation "Starlink" which is provided by a U.S.-based private company. Stable, high-speed data communication enables the instantaneous sharing of information between various units and assets, which makes it possible for the Ukrainian military to launch prompt, effective attacks. The utilization of such satellite communication is one reason the Ukrainian military has been able to maintain its SOC against the Russian military, which boasts superior fighting capabilities.



"Starlink" ground station deployment [NurPhoto-AFP]

(2) Cyber Domain

Even before Russia officially initiated its aggression against Ukraine, Ukraine's satellite communication network and other critical infrastructure elements were targeted by many cyberattacks, and such attacks became constant after the start of Russia's aggression. To respond to these cyberattacks, Ukraine pursues public-private collaboration to strengthen its cybersecurity while also accepting support from Western countries and foreign IT companies.

(3) Electromagnetic Domain

To counter high-precision attacks launched using satellite positioning systems as well as attacks by UAVs and other kinds of aggression, electronic warfare weapons are increasingly being used on the battlefields of Ukraine. In response to such electronic warfare, developments have been observed such as enhanced electronic warfare resilience of military equipment, the use of UAVs connected via fiber-optic cables, and the adoption of AI-enabled semi-autonomous flight. As both sides continue to adapt to and counter each



Anti-FPV-drone backpack-style jamming system: "KVERTUS AD COUNTER FPV BACKPACK F3 U" [AFP-Jiji]

other's tactics, a cycle of technological innovation in the field of electronic warfare is underway.



Ukrainian UAV that is highly resistant to electronic warfare: "Vampire" [Ministry of Defence of Ukraine]



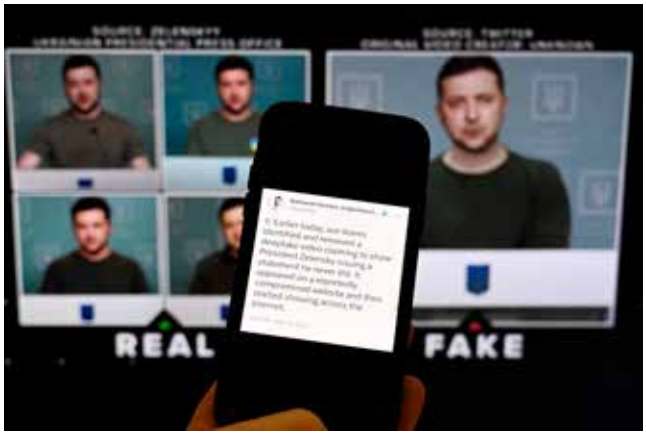
Fiber-optic FPV drone [Brave1]

(4) Information Warfare

In terms of information warfare, around the start of its aggression against Ukraine, Russia is said to have conducted false flag operations and ramped up its efforts to disseminate disinformation. To counter Russia's influence operations of this sort, Ukraine has actively engaged in strategic communication (SC) since the start of the aggression by Russia, and to achieve an advantageous situation in the SC field, Ukraine responds through its own specialized SC organization as well as in cooperation with Western countries.



Video posted by President Zelenskyy in Kyiv to counter disinformation claiming he had fled the country [President Zelenskyy's Facebook account]



A viral deepfake video [AFP-Jiji]

5 Securing and Maintaining Sustained Operational Capability

Russia has apparently established a system for domestically procuring necessary equipment at least to a certain extent, and in addition to strengthening its operational framework for munitions companies, Russia has been redeveloping stored equipment that includes tanks and ammunition produced during the Soviet era, utilizing dual-use items (items that can be used for both civilian and military applications), and taking other steps to ensure the country's SOC. In September 2024, President Vladimir Putin announced that approximately 140,000 UAVs had been supplied to the military in 2023 and that around ten times more would be supplied in 2024. In April 2025, he announced that over 1.5 million UAVs had been supplied to the military in 2024. Meanwhile, to ensure its own SOC, Ukraine has been depending on support from Western countries in terms of the supply of its equipment and ammunition. At the same time, Ukraine has been focusing on domestically producing such supplies and expanding its production capacity, and, in March 2025, Ukraine announced that it had produced at least 2.3 million UAVs in 2024.

In addition, on the battlefields of Ukraine, equipment and tactics are being updated on an extremely short cycle compared to the past, and prompt, flexible technological innovations are becoming increasingly important. For example, when the aggression against Ukraine started, both Russia and Ukraine made frequent use of unmanned assets for the purpose of reconnaissance and observation aimed at improving the accuracy of firepower attacks in particular. However, as the aggression continues to drag on, both countries have gradually started using such assets for diverse applications that include long-range attacks and attacks on the front line. To counter the operation of such unmanned assets, there have been increasingly active electronic warfare efforts, and, to respond to electronic jamming, there have been cases of UAVs with optical-fiber wired connections being used. In addition, when the aggression against Ukraine started, there was large-scale fighting involving the use of

armored vehicles, but as attacks by highly mobile UAVs have increased, there has also been an increase in attacks involving the use of motorcycles, buggies, electric scooters, and other vehicles that can more easily avoid UAVs and landmines.

To respond to the speed at which new tactics and equipment are being updated, Ukraine has introduced equipment review systems for individual soldiers in the field as well as a direct equipment procurement cycle for field units, which have enabled Ukraine to promptly update its equipment and tactics.

See Chapter 2, 2-8 (Future Outlook)



Cruise missile made in Ukraine: "Flamingo" [AFP-Jiji]

6 Support from Allies and Like-Minded Countries

In addition to providing a substantial amount of equipment to Ukraine, from man-portable missiles to fighter jets, Western countries have also been offering extensive support in terms of intelligence and training while also promoting co-production of equipment with Ukraine. In order for Ukraine to maintain its SOC, support from its allies and like-minded countries is essential.

At the same time, Russia also seems to be maintaining its military capabilities by obtaining equipment from foreign sources. It has been reported that, in addition to Russia using UAVs originally developed by Iran to attack various targets in Ukraine, China has also been sending dual-use items to Russia to bolster its SOC.

In addition, as Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues, North Korea has been enhancing its military cooperation with Russia. For example, North Korea has been providing ammunition and weapons including ballistic missiles to Russia since 2023 while also deploying soldiers to Russia since the latter half of 2024 to participate in combat with Ukraine. It has been reported that North Korean shells have been used during Russia's aggression against Ukraine and that there is a possibility that North Korea has been enhancing its tactical capabilities by taking advantage of its experience fighting against Ukraine, so it will be necessary to continue to closely monitor progress on military cooperation between Russia and North Korea.

See Chapter 2, 3-2 (How NATO Member States and Other Countries Deal with the Situation); Chapter 2, 3-3 (How Other Regions Respond)



Major equipment announced to be provided to Ukraine: "Javelin" [AFP-Jiji]



Major equipment announced to be provided to Ukraine: "F-16" fighter jet [Presidential Office of Ukraine]

7 New Ways of Warfare Emerging from Russia's Aggression against Ukraine

The new ways of warfare below have emerged during Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

- Attacks were launched in the space and cyber domains prior to traditional forms of military operation, such as air, maritime, and ground domains.
- Massive use of low-cost drones has enhanced situational awareness on the battlefield. The ability to make prompt and accurate decisions through asset networking, data integration, and the use of AI-enabled systems has become critical.
- Large scale, complex strikes combining ballistic and cruise missiles with attacks using multiple unmanned assets complicate an adversary's response, thereby imposing increased cost on an adversary. At the same time, effective countermeasures, including electronic warfare, are also required.
- It has become essential to rapidly incorporate lessons

learned and changes on the battlefield to improve defense assets and tactics.

- Warfare by fully leveraging DIMET (Diplomacy, Intelligence, Military, Economy, Technology) has been conducted.

On the other hand, in terms of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, it has also been important to incorporate conventional equipment, including tanks, artillery, and trench warfare, thereby combining modern combat approaches with traditional ones. As new ways of warfare are countered, resulting in updates to how war is waged, it will continue to be necessary to closely monitor trends in combat approaches seen in Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Section 2 Each Country's Initiatives

New ways of warfare have become apparent during Russia's aggression against Ukraine, including the mass operation and expanded applications of unmanned assets as well as artificial intelligence (AI) utilization and information warfare that includes the dissemination of disinformation. In addition, as the aggression drags on, the forces of both Russia and Ukraine are rapidly depleting their equipment and ammunition, and the importance of ensuring sufficient sustained operational capability (SOC) has become clear.

Currently, based on lessons learned from the situation clarified by Russia's aggression against Ukraine, various countries are hurrying to prepare to defend against new ways of warfare and possible protracted wars, and they are promoting initiatives that include the utilization of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and AI in the security and defense fields, information warfare that includes countermeasures against disinformation, and ensuring SOC through continuous stockpiling as well as defense production and technological base strengthening.

1 The United States

During the second term of the Trump administration, the United States has been promoting policies and initiatives related to the utilization of UAVs and AI in the national security domain, the enhancement of SOC, and other goals.

Regarding UAVs, in June 2025, President Trump issued an executive order titled "Restoring American Airspace Sovereignty," which identified the use of drones by criminals, terrorists, and other bad actors as a threat to the continental United States and was intended to help protect national activities, government facilities, etc. from unlawful activities involving the use of UAVs and other risks. President Trump also issued an executive order titled "Unleashing American Drone Dominance," which called for the formulation of policies aimed at accelerating the testing and operation of UAVs, increasing the manufacturing of UAVs in the United States, and exporting them to the global market. In particular, the executive order called for the Department of War to procure UAVs that are manufactured in the United States and offer outstanding cost performance to use them for training, expand the range of UAVs procured by the Department of War, review regulations related to the electromagnetic spectrum as a barrier to conducting training using UAVs, and identify any programs that would be more effective or lethal if replaced by UAVs.

As a result of this executive order, in July 2025, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth issued a memorandum titled "Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance," in which he indicated that UAVs are the biggest battlefield innovation in several decades, accounting for most of the year's casualties in Russia's aggression against Ukraine. He also stated that, in spite of the fact that the country's adversaries and other organizations around the world are producing far more military UAVs, the previous administration imposed restrictions that prevented the U.S. Forces from possessing the lethal small UAVs the modern battlefield requires. Based on the above considerations, the United States is promoting the following initiatives: greatly expanding the range of United States-manufactured UAVs acquired by the U.S. Forces, strengthening the UAV manufacturing base, encouraging technological development by outfitting the military with various low-cost UAVs, and conducting training that anticipates future fighting.

Regarding AI, in January 2025, the United States issued an executive order titled "Removing Barriers to American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence," which called for the formulation of policies aimed at maintaining and enhancing the global dominance of the United States in terms of AI while also reviewing regulations of the previous administration that might act as barriers standing in the way of implementing such policies, etc. In July 2025, the United States published a policy document titled "America's AI Action Plan," which stated that winning the AI race would bring prosperity for the American people, ensure the country's economic competitiveness, and contribute to national security, so the United States must take the initiative in terms of the promotion of AI-related innovation, the construction of AI infrastructure, and diplomacy and security. In the national security domain, the document also calls for the proactive incorporation of AI by the Department of War, the promotion of efforts to secure AI-related human resources and hiring, the establishment of testing facilities for AI and autonomous systems, among other measures. The U.S. Government also plans to utilize AI to prepare for the threat of CBRNE[1] weapons and cyberattacks.

In response to the above, in January 2026, Secretary of War Hegseth issued a memorandum titled "Accelerating America's Military AI Dominance," in which he indicated that, in the national security domain, AI-enabled warfare and capability development will redefine the nature of military power in the next decade and that America's military must transition to "AI-first" capabilities. To achieve this, he

1 Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, or Explosive

stipulated the need to implement the following initiatives: pursuing Department-wide experimentation with leading AI models, eliminating bureaucratic barriers to AI, and utilizing combat-proven data obtained from actual American military operations.

In terms of enhancing SOC, the U.S. Government has also mentioned the importance of its defense industrial base (DIB) in both the National Security Strategy (NSS) dated December 2025 and the National Defense Strategy (NDS) dated January 2026, and the NSS calls for the restoration of the DIB to ensure access to important supply chains and supplies. In addition, the NDS states that the United States must return to being the world's premier arsenal, one that can produce not only for itself but also for its allies at scale, rapidly, and at the highest levels of quality. To achieve this objective, the United States will reinvest in defense production, introduce new technologies that include AI, and eliminate outdated policies, regulations, practices, and other obstacles. At the same time, the United States will also take advantage of the production capabilities of allies and other partners, put alliances on a stronger footing, and enable them to do their part to maintain peace through strength. To restore the country's DIB, the United States believes it is necessary to pursue initiatives involving national mobilization.

In this connection, the Department of War is already pursuing various initiatives in the UAV, AI, and SOC fields. For example, in July 2025, the Pentagon hosted a demonstration of various UAVs manufactured in the United States, including UAVs similar to Shahed-type one-way attack UAV and escort fighter jets.[2] These took an average of 18 months to complete from conception to development, and the Department of War plans to increase the production of such UAVs. Later, in August 2025, the Joint Interagency Task Force 401 was established to counter small UAVs, and, in January 2026, the task force announced that it had acquired a counter-UAV system based on the Replicator 2[3] concept proposed during the Biden administration. In addition, in December 2025, the U.S. Central Command announced the establishment of a task force for the development of the U.S. military's first one-way attack UAV squadron, and, during the same month, Secretary of War Hegseth announced the intention to deploy tens of thousands of UAVs to the squadron in 2026 and hundreds of thousands in 2027. In March 2026, the U.S. Central Command announced the use of its Low-cost Uncrewed Combat Attack System (LUCAS), which was developed by using Shahed-series loitering munitions designed by Iran as a model, in actual combat for the first time.

In addition, in December 2025, the Department of War also introduced Department-wide generative AI. Secretary of War Hegseth subsequently encouraged personnel through social media and email to start using generative AI, emphasizing that such use will help develop an AI-first workforce and give rise to more efficient and battle-ready



A Secretary of War Hegseth poster calling for the use of AI (U.S. Department of War)



Secretary of War Hegseth visiting a space-related company during the Arsenal of Freedom Tour (U.S. Department of War)



Footage released by the Department of War when the U.S. Central Command announced the establishment of a task force for the development of a one-way attack UAV squadron (U.S. Department of War)

2 The U.S. Forces are developing UAVs to serve as escort fighter jets in order to enhance the survivability and strike capabilities of their manned aircraft systems. At an exhibition in July 2025, aircraft under development by the U.S. Marine Corps were displayed.

3 Although the details of the Replicator Initiative, which was launched by the previous Biden administration in August 2023, are not necessarily clear, the Department of War has explained that the focus of Replicator 1 is on the operation of thousands of autonomous systems in multiple fields, while the focus of Replicator 2 is on responding to the threat of small UAVs.

units. In addition, in January 2025, Secretary of War Hegseth initiated his Arsenal of Freedom Tour, during which he visited defense-related companies throughout the United States, including shipyards and startup companies, to emphasize the importance of enhancing the country's naval capabilities and promoting both space dominance and manufacturing within the United States.

2 China

China has developed military strategies based on its awareness of the international environment surrounding the country over time as well as the nature of warfare during each era. China is also aware that, as the applications of AI, quantum technology, big data, and other cutting-edge technologies to the military sector accelerate due to the development of science and technology, the framework for military competition is seeing historical changes. In this regard, it has been reported that the nature of warfare is changing from information warfare, which is waged through joint operations centered on networks based on information system infrastructure, to intelligentized warfare, which is waged in the land, sea, air, space, electromagnetic spectrum, cyberspace, and cognitive dimensions using intelligentized weapons and equipment and corresponding operational methods based on Internet of Things (IoT) systems. In light of this, China appears to recognize that the intelligentization of its military forces is a necessary condition for assembling military forces that have the combat power necessary to win future wars and achieve the country's military objectives, and, more specifically, the country seems to be acquiring cutting-edge technologies to become an innovation superpower with the aim of building a military force that can fight and win intelligentized wars.

With regard to intelligentized warfare, it has been pointed out that the Chinese military considers unmanned assets to be important intelligentized technologies, and is pursuing greater autonomy for unmanned land, sea, and air assets to enable swarm attacks, optimized logistics support, as well as dispersed intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations.

It has also been reported that China has recognized the need to utilize AI in order for new technologies to increase the speed and tempo of future combat, reduce uncertainty on the battlefield, increase the speed and quality of information processing, and provide a decision-making advantage over potential adversaries, and that the country is exploring next-generation operational concepts for intelligentized warfare, such as attrition warfare using intelligentized swarms.[4] In the 15th Five-Year Plan as well, which China formulated in March 2026, the country has indicated its intention to promptly develop unmanned, intelligentized operational capabilities, pursue scientific and technological innovation related to national defense, implement related advanced technologies, and accelerate the development of advanced weapons. It has been reported that China has learned a lot of lessons from the battlefields of Ukraine, including the operation of unmanned assets and AI, and that the country is hastening to apply such knowledge to military training, etc. as it reaffirms the importance of its current initiatives.[5]

3 Republic of Korea (ROK)

The ROK has been promoting national defense reform, including the introduction of unmanned assets, AI, and other advanced technologies, to address its shortage of soldiers, which is mainly due to the country's declining population, and respond to changes in the security environment.

The ROK's basic Defense Innovation 4.0 plan was formulated under the previous Yoon Suk Yeol administration, and the plan's aim is to achieve military strength through AI science and technology by actively introducing and utilizing cutting-edge science and technology to respond to the increasing nuclear-missile threat posed by North Korea, changes in the nature of warfare, increasing instability in terms of the security of the Northeast Asian region, the shortage of soldiers due to the ROK's decreasing population, and other challenges. Given the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, where the importance of unmanned assets as well as the space and cyber domains is increasing, this plan also emphasizes the ROK's intention to promote a shift from a system focused on manned military forces to a manned and unmanned combat system that uses AI as its base.

The Lee Jae Myung administration has inherited this approach and has expressed its intention to formulate a national defense reform roadmap aimed at developing a smart, strong military based on a foundation of AI and cutting-edge science and technology to increase the sophistication of the ROK's manned and unmanned system. In addition, President Lee Jae Myung has expressed the country's intention to intensively invest in AI, drones, robots, and other advanced technologies expected to be a game changer.

In the unmanned asset field, the Ministry of National Defense

4 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2023)
5 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoW (2025)

has stated a goal of achieving 500,000 Drone Warriors, and the ROK is also aiming to set up an environment that enables all officers and soldiers to acquire the skills necessary to pilot UAVs. In addition, to minimize human resource loss, the country's policy is to continue introducing unmanned assets with attack capabilities and other assets so that they can be utilized in place of human personnel for risky missions. During the commemorative event held by the ROK on Armed Forces Day 2025 in October 2025, the country unveiled various UAVs for the first time, including stealth unmanned aircraft, multi-purpose stealth drones, and small suicide drones, as well as unmanned assets that included unmanned ground vehicles (UGVs) for both reconnaissance and combat. The country's current stance is to continue focusing on the development and maintenance of such unmanned assets in the future.

In addition, in the AI field, the country held its first Science and Technology Ministers' Meeting in November 2025 to discuss its AX (AI Transformation) Strategy for National Defense. According to an announcement by the ROK Government, its policy is to gradually introduce AI in every field related to national defense, including both the introduction of AI for unmanned assets used on the ground, in the sea, and in the air as well as the promotion of AI combat strategists that provide decision-making support based on real-time analysis of the situations of combat zones and AI policy strategists that support policy making. In addition, as the ROK Government collectively focuses on the introduction of AI, the Ministry of National Defense has increased the AI-related budget for 2026 to approximately KRW 124.4 billion and plans to promote new projects aimed at the utilization of advanced private AI technologies in the national defense field.

4 India

India has announced the intention to create an "Adaptive Defense" to counter modern challenges that include cyberattacks, hybrid warfare, and information warfare.[6] In addition, during a speech given by Minister of Defence Rajnath Singh in August 2025, he used examples of fighting in Ukraine to show that UAVs, precision-guided weapons, and similar assets play a decisive role in modern warfare, and he pointed out that, as of the 21st century, it seems clear that cyber warfare, AI, UAVs, and satellite-based monitoring will shape the future of warfare.

In the UAV field, in July 2025, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) announced that it had successfully tested the firing of a UAV-launched precision-guided missile equipped with an anti-armored-vehicle warhead from a UAV developed by the startup company in India, and the country is taking other steps to utilize and improve the performance of UAVs as well. In addition, the Indian Army implements initiatives to have its units produce UAVs, and announced that they produced 819 UAVs for both monitoring and combat purposes by the end of 2025.

India has also announced the intention to actively invest in AI as well as related policies. In 2018, India launched a task force to start researching and developing AI in the defense field. In July 2022, India's Ministry of Defence organized and held AiDef, the country's first AI-related exhibition, through which the country announced newly developed technologies, etc. and expressed its intention to actively utilize AI in the defense field.[7] India has also developed AI-powered UAV swarm technology, and, in January 2021, the country released information on a swarm-attack demonstration involving the use of 75 UAVs. The country has announced that it also incorporates UAV swarm technology into certain Indian Army exercises.

In addition, in August 2025, the Indian military announced India's Joint Doctrine for Multi-Domain Operations, thereby pointing out the importance of the space, cyber, and cognitive dimensions as new fields. It has also been pointed out that the impact of disinformation and psychological operations is increasing, leading to national cognitive restructuring and increased social divisions that could pose a challenge for traditional military forces, so India believes that achieving superiority in the cognitive dimension could be the most important factor during both peacetime and wartime.

Regarding initiatives to ensure SOC, based on its Self-Reliant India policy, the country has announced the intention to increase its stockpile of ammunition up to its target level, establish at least two suppliers for each type of ammunition, and formulate a roadmap to establish a minimum of one domestic supplier for every type of ammunition required by the country.

6 During a speech delivered at a think tank meeting in November 2024, Defence Minister Singh stated that "Adaptive Defence" is a strategic approach where a nation's military and defense mechanisms continuously evolve to effectively counter emerging threats. He explained that this approach includes not only responding to past events, but also anticipating potential future threats and proactively preparing for them.

7 As an example in recent years, according to an announcement by the Government of India in December 2025, the Indian Army is utilizing an AI-powered decision-making tool for AI-driven preventive equipment maintenance and spare-part demand prediction to try to improve its business efficiency.

5 Europe

Based on lessons learned from Russia's aggression against Ukraine and other considerations, Europe is pursuing initiatives in fields that include unmanned assets, AI, cyber, information warfare, and SOC.

1 The United Kingdom

One example of efforts in the United Kingdom is the announcement of the Defence Drone Strategy by the Ministry of Defence in 2024. This strategy has shown an awareness of the fact that, given that unmanned assets are being effectively utilized for a wide range of applications on the battlefields of Ukraine and the related technological innovation is extremely fast, past development and procurement methods are not sufficient for responding. Based on such lessons learned, the United Kingdom has clearly stated the need to achieve the mass operation of inexpensive unmanned assets, quickly procure them, and pursue development through fast and repeated improvements while also building a resilient supply chain to strengthen the U.K. industrial base.

In the AI field, the United Kingdom announced its Strategic Defence Review 2025 in 2025, in which it identified further expansion of AI utilization as one of its priorities. For example, by introducing the Digital Targeting Web as AI infrastructure in 2027, the British military plans to comprehensively link everything from target acquisition to offensive action, thereby achieving an extremely rapid and optimal means of attacking targets based on information collected and organized using AI.

In addition, in the cyber and electromagnetic spectrum domains, the United Kingdom officially launched the Cyber & Specialist Operations Command in September 2025 to unify land, sea, and air units.

Furthermore, in the SOC field, the United Kingdom is emphasizing the need to ensure a stockpile of ammunition and equipment while also promptly replenishing it, and, to address this issue, they are expanding their production systems, including building new ammunition factories, radically reforming their equipment procurement process, and taking other steps.

2 France

Under its Military Programming Act 2024-2030, which stipulates the country's budgets and equipment procurement plan and was announced in 2023, France demonstrated its awareness that UAVs have an extremely important role on both a strategic and a tactical level, and the country has expressed the need to prioritize the acquisition of the capabilities necessary to procure a large quantity of UAVs via a short production cycle and at low cost. In addition, France has set aside a seven-year budget of 5 billion euros for UAVs, and the country has indicated that one of its goals is to achieve swarm-flight capabilities for its UAVs by 2030. Furthermore, this Military Programming Act was updated in April 2026, and, under the revised act, France is aiming to increase its land, sea, and air-based operational effectiveness by deploying UAVs to each military branch as soon as possible, including deployment to its Army battle groups, which are responsible for providing combat support and dealing with chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats, as well as deployment to key Navy frigates to improve the country's joint maritime operational capabilities.

In the AI field, to address military usage of this technology, France's Ministry of Armed Forces established the Ministerial Agency for Artificial Intelligence in Defence in 2024. AI is considered important in terms of equipping UAVs, etc. with autonomous functionality to enable them to act even when being electronically jammed and to develop image analysis capabilities for UAVs. Accordingly, France is developing systems for strengthening the country's AI-operation capabilities so it does not have to depend on other countries.

In addition, regarding the information warfare field as well, Military Programming Act 2024-2030 indicates France's intention to conduct awareness-raising activities for its people, including media education for young people and campaigns conducted as measures against disinformation. In 2025, France's Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs opened an X account called the French Response, which the country uses to humorously, sarcastically, and promptly post in response to disinformation attempts targeting France, and the country pursues other initiatives to prevent the spread of disinformation as well.

In the SOC field, France is aiming to form a strategic stockpile for withstanding large-scale conflicts, replenish or expand its ammunition stockpiles, and improve its maintenance capabilities.

3 Germany

Based on lessons learned from Russia's aggression against Ukraine and other considerations, Germany is enhancing its investment in UAVs. At the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Defense Ministers' Meeting in October 2025, Defence Minister Boris Pistorius supported NATO's plan to enhance defense by using drones and expressed Germany's intention to invest 10 billion euros in all kinds of advanced drones for attack and defense purposes in the next several years.

In addition, in the air defense field, including responding to UAVs, Germany launched the European Sky Shield Initiative in October 2022 as a multilateral framework for countering

diverse airborne threats, including the kinds of missiles and UAVs seen during Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The objective of this framework is for participating states to jointly procure, operate, and maintain air defense systems and to combine multiple air defense systems to strengthen the air defense network of various European countries in multiple layers, including everything from short-range air defense (several kilometers or less) to ballistic missile defense. At the present time, 21 European countries participate in this initiative, including Switzerland and Austria (current as of March 2025), and future trends will continue to be monitored.

In addition, in the information warfare field, Germany is responding to the threat of disinformation based on examples of disinformation related to Russia's aggression against Ukraine by providing the German people with information on how to identify disinformation, such as basic approaches that include the utilization of fact-checking and confirmation of information sources, thereby alerting them to such dangers.

In the SOC field as well, Germany is working on strengthening its defense industrial base. Germany's National Security and Defence Industry Strategy, which was formulated in December 2024, points out that there have been efforts to promote the development of innovative technologies during Russia's aggression against Ukraine through digitization and increased battlefield transparency, indicating that it is necessary to respond to such rapid technological progress. In line with the country's policy to maintain the production capacity of specific key industries under this strategy, Germany has specified AI, quantum technology, unmanned systems, and the like as especially important defense industry technologies, and the country is aiming to build systems offering domestic supply capabilities to avoid having to depend on foreign countries for such technologies.

6 Israel

Israel has been utilizing UAVs, AI, and other technologies during its clashes with Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip as well as its attacks against Iran. In addition, Israel is responding to attacks launched by neighboring countries and organizations using UAVs and missiles by taking advantage of a multi-layered air defense framework that uses multiple systems as well as support provided by systems of the United States, etc. In April 2026, Israel also announced its intention to accelerate the production of its Arrow air defense system and is taking other steps to expand its stockpile as well.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have been utilizing UAVs for purposes that include reconnaissance, attacks, and border security. For example, during an attack launched against Iran in June 2025, Israel used UAVs and other assets that had been smuggled into Iran via a UAV base set up in the country in advance to destroy Iranian missile systems, etc. In addition, due to the need to respond to a wide range of UAVs from Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Iran, Israel started promoting relevant technological development through a startup company in October 2023. It has also been reported that, during clashes in the Gaza Strip, 50% of the counter-UAV systems used by the IDF were developed by startup companies, and future trends on development will continue to draw attention.

Meanwhile, it has also been pointed out that, during its clashes with Palestinian militants in 2023, Israel effectively utilized AI to select attack targets and track suspicious Hamas movements. For example, Israel uses its AI system Gospel to accumulate a huge amount of information, including cell phone messages, satellite images, and video recorded by UAVs, to specify attack targets and support decision-making. In the past, the IDF had to manually identify 50 targets per year, but it has been reported that, with Gospel, the IDF is capable of identifying 100 targets per day. It is believed that based on this AI-generated information, the targets are then confirmed by a human analyst, and approved targets are communicated to each branch of the IDF.

In addition, in December 2025, Israel increased its air defense capabilities as well by delivering Iron Beam, an air defense laser weapon that is powered by AI and enables rapid threat detection and interception decisions, to units of the Israel Defense Forces.

During the attacks against Iran starting in February 2026, the Israel Defense Forces conducted joint operations involving UAVs and fighter jets, attacked Iranian missile launch bases, and engaged in other operations involving the combined use of manned aerial vehicles, UAVs, AI, and other technologies.

Perspective

Initiatives Related to New Ways of Warfare of the U.S. Forces

Colonel KAWAMURA Kouki, Senior Fellow, Global Security Division, National Institute for Defense Studies

To overcome the fog of war, it has long been understood that frontline units and headquarters need to share information, and units need to work together while using a common map of operations, thereby achieving a synergistic effect. This requires a network that enables information to be exchanged continuously between sensors, shooters, and decision-makers. It has long been believed that making this a reality would give commanders the advantage in terms of decision-making, while also enabling individual units to take autonomous actions toward exploiting an opponent's weaknesses.

From the Gulf War onward, the U.S. Forces worked toward a force design based on the concept of "network-centric warfare." Underlining this was the concept of combining a huge number of satellites, radars, and other sensors to create an information infrastructure, which, if maintained in a stable manner, would naturally lead to an improved level of situational awareness. However, since radar-equipped information-gathering aircraft and ground combat platforms move at a fast pace across vast battlefields spanning tens to hundreds of kilometers, wireless communication tends to become the dominant means of connecting units with one another. This has also been a point of vulnerability that could be exploited to interrupt network operations.

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were fought on the premise that the opponent lacked the capability to disrupt U.S. Forces' networks. In the 2010s, however, there was a real possibility that potential adversaries would disrupt networks using a variety of different means, including kinetic attacks, electronic interference, and cyber weapons. An example of this is the U.S. Forces' airborne warning and control systems involved in the Syrian civil war, which were subjected to jamming by Russian electronic warfare units. This and similar incidents have brought about a sense of crisis on the U.S. side. An "unacceptable environment" for military operations is a situation in which information and communication lines cannot be used as intended due to disruption, interference, or similar actions by an opponent. Concerns spread within the U.S. Forces that ultimately, network-centric warfare may not be well adapted to such environments.

What has emerged from this is the concept of "decision-centric warfare." This is based on a disaggregated force design, and its aim is to create mosaic-like networks composed of multiple nodes, rather than bringing together all systems in a single network. Instead of sophisticated, high-quality information nodes that are vulnerable to attack, the concept prioritizes a kill web composed of low-cost sensors and expendable unmanned systems that can be maintained even in unacceptable environments for military operations.

As Bryan Clark and Dan Patt of the Hudson Institute have noted, the objective of decision-centric warfare is to accelerate the U.S. Forces' own decision-making processes, while at the same time posing enemies with an insoluble set of dilemmas to disrupt operations, thereby preventing them from reaching objectives in time. As such, attention has been drawn to a command and control structure that combines human commanders with AI-equipped machines. AI decision-support algorithms suggest courses of action that an opponent cannot predict, helping to determine the combination of forces and tactics necessary to accomplish a mission before field commanders issue orders. In contrast to network-centric warfare, which led to much more centralized decision-making, it has come to be expected that decision-centric warfare will encourage a level of autonomy and flexibility across subordinate units.

Decision-centric warfare, which aims to flexibly combine various assets as a way of adapting to changes on the battlefield, is a new concept for overcoming the fog of war and frictions inherent to military operations. It can also be said that the concept supports Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2), whose goal is to enhance the capabilities of the U.S. Unified Combatant Command by strengthening coordination across air, land, marine, space, and cyberspace domains.

(Note) This column is an independent analysis from the researcher's academic perspective, and its contents do not represent an official government position.

Perspective

Initiatives Related to New Ways of Warfare in China

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Russia's aggression against Ukraine has drawn attention to warfare in the cognitive dimension; that is, information warfare and psychological warfare. Meanwhile, China appears to be using such warfare to validate its own military doctrine. Up to present, China has established "informationized local wars" as its military doctrine. This places importance on the elements in C4ISR: command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. Furthermore, as its next military doctrine, it envisions "intelligentized warfare" that incorporates AI, unmanned assets, quantum technology, and other technologies. With intelligentized warfare, there is a greater focus on the operation of unmanned assets and AI, as well as warfare in cyberspace and the cognitive dimension.

China has traditionally focused on warfare in the cognitive dimension, employing the "Three Warfares" of "media warfare," "psychological warfare," and "legal warfare." It appears that the country intends to integrate warfare in the cognitive dimension with the physical domains of land, maritime, air, and space, along with cyberspace and the information domain. It is believed that China intends to combine its mechanized forces, such as firepower and mobility, with its informationized forces, such as C4ISR and cyberattacks, and intelligentized forces, primarily unmanned assets and AI, in order to destroy or paralyze its opponents in the physical and information domains, as well as actively spreading information that mixes together truths and falsehoods through various channels, including mass media and social media, and leveraging the results from this as much as possible in order to gain superiority in the cognitive dimension.

This Chinese policy is also apparent in the military parade it held in September 2025. China actively employed media warfare through the parade, including (i) holding a pre-event briefing, (ii) unveiling a selection of weapons during rehearsals, (iii) providing detailed commentary via state-controlled media on the actual day of the parade, and similar. Moreover, during the parade itself, the country showcased (i) its nuclear forces, including a new type of ICBM, (ii) long-range precision strike capabilities, such as anti-ship missiles, hypersonic missiles, and cruise missiles, (iii) numerous unmanned assets, including the aircraft Royal Wingman, which can be flown in coordination with manned aircraft, and more, as well as demonstrating their capabilities. Weapons were also on display from the Information Support Force, which is believed to be responsible for establishing and defending China's C4ISR systems, the Cyberspace Force, which is believed to carry out cyberattacks, and the Aerospace Force, which is believed to be responsible for the centralized management of space assets.

Therefore, it appears that China is seeking to "win without fighting" by actively showcasing its current military forces, thereby impressing on the United States and Taiwan the high cost of armed conflict. However, given that China's objective is to gain superiority in the cognitive dimension, it is essential not to take China's explanations at face value, but rather, carefully analyze whether these weapons are actually in military service.

(Note) This column is an independent analysis from the researcher's academic perspective, and its contents do not represent an official government position.

Section 3 Trends in Various Domains and Advanced Technologies That Support New Ways of Warfare

1 Trends in Space Domain

1 Space Domain and Security

There is no concept of national borders in space, meaning that the utilization of satellites enables observation, communications, and positioning anywhere on Earth.

Thus, major countries make efforts to enhance the capabilities of a variety of satellites and launch them for the purpose of enhancing C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) functions. Such satellites include information gathering satellites that collect imagery and signals concerning various activities, early warning satellites for detecting the launch of ballistic missiles, positioning satellites for enhancing the precision of weapons systems, communication satellites used for communications relay.

On the other hand, anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons to hinder the utilization of space by other countries are also under development.

Regarding destructive Direct-Ascent Anti-SATellite (DA-ASAT) missiles, China and Russia conducted tests targeting their own satellites in 2007 and 2021, respectively. As a result, a large amount of space debris has been generated, raising concerns about the risk of such debris colliding with satellites and other space assets of various countries.

Regarding China, it has been pointed out that the robot arm technologies being developed by China to inspect and repair in-orbit satellites can be repurposed as ASATs such as satellite-attack satellites (so-called "killer satellites"). As for Russia, it has been pointed out that the ejection of an object from its satellite against a nearby satellite was an ASAT experiment.[1]

Furthermore, it has been pointed out that China and Russia are developing jammers for interfering with communications between target satellites and ground stations, as well as high energy technology such as laser weapons designed to degrade or damage satellites. In addition, a Russian cyberattack on a satellite communication provider in 2022 disrupted satellite communications services, raising concerns about cyberattacks on space systems.

As threats in space continue to rise, many countries are increasingly positioning space as a "warfighting domain" or "operational domain." These countries are working on space domain awareness (SDA) to monitor threats to their space assets.

Against this backdrop, to formulate international rules with peaceful usage and the need to prevent an arms race in mind, the United Nations (UN) is debating this issue in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly.

In addition, there is the Combined Space Operations (CSpO) Initiative as an initiative among like-minded countries. This is a multilateral framework that holds various discussions on policy, operational, systematic, legal, and other issues necessary for space security. There are currently 10 participating countries, including Japan.

See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 1-1-4 (Responses in the Space Domain); Part III, Chapter 1, Section 2-4-1 (Space Domain)

2 Various Countries' Outer Space Initiatives

(1) The United States

The United States is the world's greatest space power that has been promoting a variety of space activities in military, science, resource mapping and other domains. The launch of the first reconnaissance satellite in the world and the first landing on the Moon are also among its great achievements. The U.S. military clearly recognizes the importance of outer space and is actively utilizing it.

In 2023, the United States demonstrated an accelerated process from satellite payload loading to operation to improve the readiness of its satellite launch capabilities. The United States is also launching numerous satellites to build the Proliferated Warfighter Space Architecture (PWSA) satellite constellation that detects and tracks missile threats, including hypersonic weapons, from space.

In terms of policy, after the second Trump administration was established in the United States in January 2025, the administration issued an executive order titled "The Iron Dome for America,"[2] which requires that all related government agencies submit reports on the building of a missile defense system that utilizes space assets as well as designs and plans aimed at achieving this. In December 2025, President Trump also issued an executive order titled

1 According to "Challenges to Security in Space," the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) (2022).
2 In this executive order, the system was referred to as "The Iron Dome for America." However, it later came to be known as the "Golden Dome for America" (GDA).

"Ensuring American Space Superiority," which set out various objectives for ensuring the national and economic security of the United States in space, including returning to the surface of the Moon by 2028. More specifically, based on the executive order "The Iron Dome for America," the United States is aiming to develop and demonstrate next-generation missile defense technologies by 2028, ensure the ability to detect, characterize, and counter threats to the United States from very low-Earth orbit and through cislunar space, including placing nuclear weapons in space, create a national security space architecture by promoting acquisition reform that integrates commercial space capabilities, and enhance collective space security for both the United States and its allies, etc. In addition, "Ensuring American Space Superiority" calls for relevant government agencies to identify technology and supply chain gaps related to strengthening U.S. air and missile defense and formulate a detailed improvement plan to address them within 90 days, and to formulate a national security strategy related to space within 180 days.

Based on these policies, in May 2025, the U.S. Department of War announced a plan to develop a "Golden Dome," which will be capable of intercepting hypersonic, ballistic, and advanced cruise missiles launched both within and outside of Earth's atmosphere. This system will include both space-based interceptors and sensors, and it will offer interoperability with existing interceptors to function alongside them. The current plan is for the "Golden Dome" to be operational within three years.

In addition, in November 2025, the United States announced the plan to deploy new weapons capable of jamming Chinese and Russian intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance satellites all over the world.

As for organizations, the United States inaugurated the U.S. Space Command as a new regional unified combatant command based on the Strategic Command's component in charge of space missions in 2019. The United States created the Space Force under the Department of the Air Force as the sixth military branch, with approximately 16,000 personnel. In addition, to promote the use of commercial services, the United States established a department to coordinate their use in the Space Command and a department to support industry-government-academia collaboration in the Space Force.

In December 2023, the United States declared that the U.S. Space Command had achieved full operational capability. In October 2024, the Department of Defense announced that the following responsibilities had been added to the role of the U.S. Space Command Commander: synchronizing and deconflicting offensive and defensive space operations in coordination with other unified combatant commands, government departments and agencies, military services, allied nations, and other entities, in accordance with joint campaign objectives.[3] In addition, in November 2025, in line with the announcement to deploy jamming weapons as described above, the U.S. Space Force established the new Space Electronic Warfare Tactical Operations Center to oversee and coordinate jamming operations.

See Chapter 3, Section 1-2 (Military Posture)

(2) China

China has been promoting space development since the 1950s and is investing in space systems aimed at strengthening the country's C4ISR and targeting capabilities. China has been further intensifying its space activities in recent years, including completing the Tiangong space station and advancing plans for a lunar base. In 2024, China accelerated its efforts to build a satellite constellation for rapid information gathering and communication, including starting to launch Guowang and Qianfan, low-Earth orbit Internet satellite groups. It has been reported that China has over 1,000 satellites and plans to launch thousands more by 2030. In addition, these satellite groups will apparently be deployed as megaconstellations, which are intended to compete with Starlink as alternative providers of global Internet service.[4]

Furthermore, efforts in lunar exploration are advancing. In June of 2024, the unmanned lunar probe Chang'e 6 successfully completed the first-ever sample collection and return mission from the far side of the Moon.

While traditionally emphasizing international cooperation and the peaceful use of space, it is pointed out that China proactively used space for military purposes, including information gathering, communications and positioning through satellites. For example, the possibility of military use has been pointed out with respect to BeiDou for aircraft and vessel navigation and guidance of missiles, and with respect to Yaogan for electronic and image reconnaissance.

In May 2025, China announced that it intends to build space-based artificial intelligence (AI) computing infrastructure and that it had launched 12 computing satellites, the first of their kind in the world, as part of its Three-Body Computing Constellation, the purpose of which is to process data in orbit. These satellites will use optical communications and a distributed network to process data collected in orbit and then directly send the results to the ground. China plans to eventually launch 2,800 such satellites.

It has been pointed out that China recognizes counter-space operations as a means to deter and oppose intervention by the United States in regional conflicts[5] and carries out ASAT development and the like. For example, China has already deployed multiple satellites, including its geostationary satellite Shijian-21, that are capable of jamming

3 U.S. DoD Directive 3100.10
4 According to the "2025 Worldwide Threat Assessment," U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency
5 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2025)

or destroying other satellites.

In addition, it has also been pointed out that China continues to acquire and develop various ASAT capabilities and related technologies, such as ground-based lasers and orbital space robots.[6]

China is thus expected to continue focusing on space development. The United States has concluded that China is pursuing space capabilities at the same or a higher level than those of the United States.[7] It has also been pointed out that China has more military satellites in operation than the United States.[8]

In terms of policy, China insists that space is key to international strategic competition and that the safety of space is a strategic safeguard for nation building and social development. It also reveals the principle that it accelerates development of the aerospace domain. In 2024, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, China National Space Administration, and China Manned Space Engineering Office announced the "National Medium and Long-term Development Plan for Space Science (2024-2050)," which outlines a roadmap for China to achieve its policy of leading the world in the space domain through the implementation of three phases, set for 2027, 2035, and 2050.

As part of organizational reforms, it was noted that the former Strategic Support Force was disbanded in 2024 and its subordinate units were reorganized into military space and cyber forces. Prior to 2024, the Strategic Support Force was said to have been tasked with space, cyber, and electronic warfare.

(3) Russia

While Russian space activity has been reduced since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia has continued to be active in space in recent years, even after its aggression against Ukraine. For example, Russia continues to launch a large number of various types of satellites, including the Kosmos series, and sends Progress series cargo aircraft to the International Space Station (ISS). Furthermore, Russia has revealed a development plan for its own space station, with each module scheduled to be launched between 2028 and 2033.

Note that, in terms of ASATs, the U.S. Government has concluded that the Kosmos 2576 satellite launched by Russia in 2024 is in fact a counter-space weapon with the capability to attack other satellites. There have also been claims that Russia is planning to deploy a nuclear-armed anti-satellite system in space. However, the Russian Government has denied these allegations.

In regard to Russian policies, Russia released in 2016 the Federal Space Program for 2016-2025 as a specific future guideline for space activities, including the development and deployment of domestic space satellites and crewed flight programs. In 2023, the Russian Government announced the "Strategy for the Development of the Communications Industry until 2035," which specifies a goal of building a satellite constellation for Internet communication by 2030.

From an organizational perspective, ROSCOSMOS, one of the Russian state-owned enterprises, is in charge of space activities related to Russia's scientific and economic areas, while the Russian Ministry of Defence is involved in space activities for security purposes. The Russian Aerospace Forces, into which the Air Force and the Aerospace Defence Forces were integrated in August 2015, conduct actual space activities for military purposes and manage facilities for launching satellites.

(4) North Korea

In 2023, North Korea claimed to have successfully launched and put into operation "Malligyong-1," which is purported to be a reconnaissance satellite. In addition, North Korea stated that it had a goal of launching three additional satellites in 2024. However, a launch conducted in May of that year, which used ballistic missile technology for the purpose of putting a satellite into orbit, is believed to have failed, and no further launches have been confirmed since.

In terms of organization, in 2023, North Korea reorganized the National Aerospace Development Administration, which had been in charge of rocket and satellite development, into the National Aerospace Technology Administration. The Reconnaissance Satellite Operation Office, a military intelligence organization, reportedly exists within the National Aerospace Technology Administration's Pyongyang General Control Center and reports information obtained by reconnaissance satellites to the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the Workers' Party and, in accordance with the CMC's instructions, provides the information to key military units and the Reconnaissance General Bureau.

(5) Republic of Korea (ROK)

The ROK's space development is promoted based on the Fourth Basic Space Development Promotion Plan announced in December 2022 under the Space Development Promotion Act implemented in 2005. The plan mainly aims to double the space-related budget, promote the space industry, etc.

The ROK's Ministry of National Defense has stated that it will acquire military reconnaissance satellites to enhance its Korean Peninsula monitoring capabilities.[9] In December 2023, the ROK military launched their first military reconnaissance satellite in the United States, and, by November 2025, they had finished launching five such satellites. Currently, of the

6 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2025)
7 According to the "2025 Worldwide Threat Assessment," U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency
8 According to the "2025 Worldwide Threat Assessment," U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency
9 According to the ROK Defense "2022 Defense White Paper" (2023)

five reconnaissance satellites possessed by the ROK military, three are in operation, while the other two are undergoing trial operation.

In terms of organization, the ROK established the Korea AeroSpace Administration (KASA) in 2024 due to the expansion of space policy and business fields as well as increased commercial use of space. KASA's responsibilities include formulating aerospace-related policies and handling public-private coordination. Meanwhile, to systematically and comprehensively handle outer space-related security at the state level, the ROK's National Intelligence Service runs the National Space Security Center. In addition, in June 2024, the Space Operations Battalion was expanded to become the Space Operations Squadron. This squadron is under the command of the ROK Air Force and is responsible for analyzing space objects and satellites active around the Korean Peninsula as well as protecting the country's space assets.

(6) India

India operates the regional satellite navigation system NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation), designed for positioning services for locations surrounding the country. In addition, in 2023, India completed the "Chandrayaan-3" mission by becoming the first country to successfully land unmanned lunar probes near the lunar south pole, which indicates the country's advanced technological capabilities. In June 2025, an astronaut working for the Indian Air Force became the first Indian in history to conduct activities on the ISS.

In addition, India seems to be promoting further space development, including the country's "Chandrayaan-4" plan to send a new unmanned lunar exploration vessel to the Moon to collect a lunar sample and return it to Earth as well as India's plan to build its own space station.

In October 2024, India also approved the third phase of the Space Based Surveillance (SBS) project, under which the country plans to launch at least 52 satellites into low Earth orbit and geostationary orbit within the next 10 years. Furthermore, in November of the same year, India conducted the space exercise "Antariksha Abhyas," organized by the Defence Space Agency, demonstrating its continued efforts to integrate space capabilities into national defense.

India is also promoting bilateral cooperation in the space domain. In addition to efforts to enhance its relationship with the United States, India has welcomed a stronger partnership with Russia in the space domain, including manned spaceflight programs, satellite navigation, and planetary exploration, as stated in the joint statement issued following the India-Russia Summit Meeting held in December 2025.

(7) Europe

The European Union (EU) allocated EUR 14.88 billion to its space policy in its medium-term budget plan from 2021 through 2027. To promote the space industry and strengthen security, the EU is advancing initiatives aimed at the sustainable use of advanced and resilient Positioning, Navigation, and Timing (PNT) capabilities, precise Earth observation, enhanced space surveillance and tracking capabilities, and secure satellite communication services. In 2023, the EU published its Space Security and Defense Strategy, which stated that it would strengthen the use of space capabilities in security and defense, and it plans to develop new Earth observation services and provide initial SDA services.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) indicated its recognition that space is the fifth operational domain alongside land, sea, air and cyberspace and that armed attacks in space could trigger NATO's right to collective self-defense. In its new strategic concept published in 2022, NATO stated that it would strengthen its ability to operate effectively in the space and cyber domains. In October 2024, some NATO members agreed to the promotion of the "NORTHLINK initiative," which is a plan to build a military-satellite communication network in the Arctic, as well as the start of the "STARLIFT initiative," which is a plan to secure rocket launch capabilities.

The United Kingdom, in its Defence Space Strategy announced in 2022, stated that it will invest GBP 1.4 billion over the next 10 years in areas such as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) and satellite communications. In addition, U.K. Space Command, which was officially established in 2021, successfully launched Tyche, its first information gathering satellite, in 2024.

France announced the Space Defence Strategy in 2019, stating that it aimed to establish a space command and strengthen its threat recognition and space situation monitoring capabilities. In the same year, France established a space command under the Air Force. In 2020, the Air Force was renamed the Air and Space Force, adding activities to ensure free access to space and freedom of action in space to its duties. In addition, under its Military Programming Act 2024-2030, France has stated its intention to increase its defense budget for the space domain by EUR 3.9 billion by 2030, increase communication connectivity and resilience, enhance the country's information gathering methods, accelerate or expand its ability to act both in outer space and in terms of efforts aimed at outer space, and pursue other goals.

2 Trends in Cyber Domain

1 Cyberspace and Security

Cyberspace, which is formed by various services and communities, including the Internet, is becoming increasingly important as a new social domain. Therefore, cyberattacks that compromise information assets and networks in cyberspace are real threats to security because they can have serious impacts on society.

Additionally, typical cyberattacks include unauthorized access, information leakage and disruption of computer functions by malware (malicious software), information falsification and theft, and distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks that impair networks by transmitting large amounts of data simultaneously. When cyberattacks target electric power systems, medical systems, and other critical infrastructure, they can also cause damage that includes system failures. The methods of attack are also becoming increasingly advanced and sophisticated, and it has been pointed out that AI can be used to launch cyberattacks that are faster and more sophisticated than anything people could do without it.

For military forces as well, cyberspace forms the foundation of command and control, which extends from central command to ground-level forces, as well as the foundation for operating unmanned assets, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and critical infrastructure, which makes cyberspace essential in many fields. In this regard, the dependence of military forces on cyberspace is further increasing. There is a high probability of cyberattacks being launched on such infrastructure not only in peacetime but also before traditional forms of invasion through air, sea, and land, so it is necessary to promptly and accurately respond to threats in the cyber domain. In addition, since cyberattacks do not require weapons and it is not easy to identify the attackers and ascertain the damage, such attacks are recognized as an asymmetrical means to impede military activities of adversaries at low cost. It is believed that many foreign armed forces are establishing or enhancing their cyberattack capabilities.

2 Threat Trends in Cyberspace

Cyberattacks have frequently been carried out against not only government organizations and military forces but also business corporations and academic organizations in various countries, targeting their critical technology, confidential information and personal data. In addition, advanced persistent threats (APTs), which are relentless cyberattacks on specific organizations, are also considered to be organized activities because they require abundant resources, arrangements, and capabilities for long-term activities. Amid this situation, the United Kingdom has also identified cyberattacks by China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran as "real and enduring threats."[10]

(1) China

In China, it was once believed that units responsible for cyber warfare were organized under the Strategic Support Force, but it has been pointed out that the Strategic Support Force was dissolved in 2024 and that its subordinate Cyberspace Force was elevated to a service arm. Taiwan has pointed out that, in terms of cyberattack methods used by China, China attempts to infiltrate Taiwan's core infrastructure networks through combined approaches that include attacks on hardware and software vulnerabilities, DDoS attacks, and social engineering,[11] and that China also launches cyberattacks targeting Internet-based logistics, command and control, communications, commercial activities, and military infrastructure, thereby attempting to disrupt Taiwan's activities.[12] China's 2019 defense white paper, released in July 2019 and titled "China's National Defense in the New Era," stated that China's armed forces are accelerating the building of their cyberspace capabilities. China is thus believed to have been enhancing its military's cyber warfare capabilities.

See Fig. I-4-3-1 (Chinese APT Group); Chapter 3, Section 2-2-5 (Military Posture)

10 According to "NCSC Annual Review 2024," U.K. National Cyber Security Centre (2024)
11 According to the "Analysis on China's Cyber Threats to Taiwan's Critical Infrastructure in 2025," National Security Bureau
12 According to Taiwan's "National Defense Report" (2025)

Fig. I-4-3-1 Chinese APT Group

Group name	Organizations with reported connections	Characteristics of the group and major cyberattack cases
Salt Typhoon	Chinese Government	Characteristics: Continuing extensive cyberattacks against the United States and its allies to establish superiority in the information domain. Major Cyberattack Case: In December 2025, the U.S. Department of War announced that Salt Typhoon had conducted a large-scale cyber espionage operation against multiple U.S. telecommunications providers around the fall of 2024.
Volt Typhoon	Chinese Government	Characteristics: Infiltrations into critical infrastructure providers in the U.S. telecommunications, energy, transportation, and water sectors have been confirmed, with indications that access rights to the networks of critical infrastructure providers have been secured in advance to conduct cyberattacks on critical infrastructure in times of emergency. Major Cyberattack Case: In December 2025, the U.S. Department of War announced that Volt Typhoon had deeply infiltrated U.S. critical infrastructure in 2024. In addition to infiltrating critical infrastructure, there are indications that the theft of operationally sensitive information from the U.S. military through cyber espionage activities may aim to weaken U.S. support for Taiwan in times of crisis.
Flax Typhoon	Chinese Government	Characteristics: Primarily targeting Taiwan, the group exploits common vulnerabilities to gain initial access to victims' computers, and then maintains ongoing access to the network using legitimate remote access software. Major Cyberattack Case: In September 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice uncovered a botnet consisting of over 200,000 consumer devices in the United States and around the world. It was announced that Flax Typhoon was operating.

(Note) Based on the "Annual Report on Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoW (2025) and other documents.

(2) Russia

It has been pointed out that in the case of Russia, the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces (GRU), the Federal Security Service (FSB), and the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) have been involved in cyberattacks, and it has become clear that Russia's armed forces have a cyber command unit.[13] The cyber command unit is believed to be responsible for conducting offensive cyber activities, including inserting malware into command and control systems of adversaries, and is said to have approximately 1,000 personnel.[14]

Moreover, Russia revealed, in its National Security Strategy released in 2021, its perception that space and information space are under active development as a new domain for military action and identified strengthening Russia's sovereignty in the information space as a national priority.

Russia is said to be improving its espionage, influence, and attack capabilities,[15] and, in December 2025, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and the National Security Agency (NSA) issued a warning indicating that pro-Russia hacktivists[16] have been engaging in computer network activities aimed at various global targets for the purpose of espionage, sabotage, and inflicting reputational harm.[17] It has also been reported that some of these hacktivists are connected to the Government of Russia.

See Fig. I-4-3-2 (Russian APT Group)

13 According to a statement made by Russian Minister of Defence Shoigu, in an information session for Duma, the lower house, in February 2017. He said that the Russian military has a cyber command for countering political propaganda in the context of Russia's ongoing information war with Western countries. However, the then minister did not name the command.
14 According to "A Playbook for Winning the Cyber War," Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) (September 2025)
15 According to "Cyber Strategy 2023," the U.S. DoD (2023)
16 A coined word that combines "hacker" and "activist"
17 According to the "JOINT CYBERSECURITY ADVISORY," U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) (December 2025)

Fig. I-4-3-2 Russian APT Group

Group name	Organizations with reported connections	Characteristics of the group and major cyberattack cases
APT28 (Fancy Bear)	Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (GRU)	Characteristics: Exploits vulnerable routers worldwide to intercept and steal classified information related to military, government, and critical infrastructure. Major Cyberattack Case: In April 2026, the U.S. Department of Justice and the FBI announced that they had neutralized a network of small office/home office (SOHO) routers that had been compromised by APT28 to facilitate Domain Name System (DNS) hijacking operations*. * DNS hijacking operations: Operations that illegitimately rewrite domain name system settings that should not be altered, redirecting users to different websites. Malware and other means are used on the redirected website to illegally steal information.
APT29 (Cozy Bear)	Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR)	Characteristics: Emphasizes maintaining anonymity and avoiding detection; if there is suspicion of being discovered, it conducts destructive activities to erase traces. Major Cyberattack Case: In October 2024, multiple organizations, including the FBI and NSA, issued security advisories regarding the SVR threat. According to this advisory, in 2023, APT29 sent phishing emails disguised as technical support organizations using Microsoft Teams accounts and chat functions, attempting to gain access to the recipient accounts through social engineering techniques.
Berserk Bear	Federal Security Service (FSB)	Characteristics: For over 10 years, it has targeted devices worldwide that utilize outdated, unencrypted standards. Major Cyberattack Case: In August 2025, the FBI announced that it had detected Berserk Bear targeting network devices with unpatched vulnerabilities, widely attacking organizations in the United States and around the world.

(Note) Based on FBI report "Russian GRU Exploiting Vulnerable Routers to Steal Sensitive Information" (April 2026) and other documents.

(3) North Korea

North Korea's intelligence agencies include the Reconnaissance General Bureau (RGB) and the State Information Bureau. It has been pointed out that their main targets for information gathering are the ROK, the United States, and Japan.[18] It has also been pointed out that their personnel are trained by these agencies. This is led by the RGB of the Korean People's Army, and North Korea has intensively built-up cyber units, operating some 6,800 people.[19] It also is said that North Korea, which is under sanctions of various kinds, uses cyberattacks and dispatches North Korean IT workers to foreign countries to acquire foreign currency by taking advantage of sanction loopholes.[20] It also steals foreign military secret intelligence and develops capabilities to attack the critical infrastructure of other countries. According to a report published by the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT) in October 2025, from January 2024 to September 2025, North Korea stole the equivalent of at least USD 2.8 billion worth of cryptocurrency, approximately 1/3rd of its foreign currency income was due to the theft of cryptocurrency in 2024, and North Korea is promoting plans related to weapons of mass destruction and the development of ballistic missiles. In addition, it has been reported that North Korea conducts supply chain attacks that target cryptocurrency supply networks, uses generative AI of various countries to create phishing emails, and creates malware.

See Fig. I-4-3-3 (North Korean APT Group)

18 According to "North Korea Military Power," U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (2021)
19 According to the ROK Defense "2022 Defense White Paper" (2023)
20 According to "North Korea Military Power," U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (2021)

Fig. I-4-3-3 North Korean APT Group

Group name	Organizations with reported connections	Characteristics of the group and major cyberattack cases
APT37	Ministry of State Security	Characteristics: Conducts intelligence activities targeting North Korean defector communities, human rights organizations, the ROK Government, etc. Major Cyberattack Case: In May 2024, a large-scale attack was carried out utilizing vulnerabilities in internet pop-up advertisements, targeting ROK officials and representatives of North Korea-related NGOs.
Lazarus Group	Reconnaissance General Bureau of the General Staff Department of the Korean People's Army	Characteristics: Engages in activities focused on generating revenue, including the theft of cryptocurrency. Major Cyberattack Case: From January 2024 to September 2025, a cyberattack group known as "TraderTraitor," believed to belong to the same group, stole approximately USD 2.58 billion worth of cryptocurrency.
APT43 (Kimsuky)		Characteristics: Conducts intelligence activities using social engineering, targeting government officials in the ROK and the United States. Major Cyberattack Case: In January 2024, malware was deployed through the website of an ROK construction industry organization, stealing system information and authentication credentials.

(Note) Based on the Second Report of the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (October 22, 2025).

(4) Iran

In Iran, the principal actors behind cyberattacks are believed to include state-sponsored APT groups that cooperate with the Islamic Republic of Iran Army and are associated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which is under the direct command of the Supreme Leader, and the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), which is under the jurisdiction of the President, as well as hacktivists that act independently of the government. These groups carry out a wide range of attacks, including DDoS attacks, website falsification, and sophisticated destructive activities that target industrial control systems and operational technologies. In general, hacktivist groups are categorized differently than APT groups, but, as Iran expands its cyber operations, hacktivists are starting to emulate tactics and methods used by APT groups, raising concerns that include tool and capability sharing as well as command and control relationships.[21]

In the last several years, Iran has been launching more frequent cyber operations against critical U.S. infrastructure. For example, a group of hacktivists who call themselves the CyberAv3ngers and emerged in October 2023 to resist the actions of Israel in Gaza has been primarily targeting Israeli infrastructure but also launches attacks against U.S. water and sewer services.

In March 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and NSA issued a warning that hacker groups allegedly affiliated with Iran's IRGC had launched cyberattacks targeting industrial control systems.

In addition, it has been reported that, during the exchange of attacks with Iran in June 2025, cyberattacks were launched by Iran.

3 Initiatives against Cyberspace Threats

Given these growing threats in cyberspace, various initiatives are under way.

Because the United States, Europe, Japan, and other countries support the free, fair, and safe use of cyberspace, they hold discussions on how international law should be applied as well as putting norms into practice. In contrast, Russia, China, and similar countries call for the possibility of new, legally binding treaties and are continuing to hold discussions due to differing views. Starting in 2021, the UN held a five-year Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) in which all UN members participated. The OEWG discussed a wide range of topics, including cyberspace threat perceptions, norms, the application of international law, and confidence-building measures, and, in 2025, they submitted their final report, including the establishment of the Global Mechanism, a framework for continuing with OEWG work, to the UN General Assembly, which approved it.

See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 1-1-5 (Responses in the Cyber Domain); Part III, Chapter 1, Section 2-4-2 (Cyber Domain)

(1) The United States

In the United States, the Department of Homeland Security is responsible for protecting federal government networks and critical infrastructure against cyberattacks, and CISA works to protect the networks of government agencies. In addition, to help prevent the leakage of sensitive information related to critical infrastructure, etc., in September 2023, the United States proposed new regulations to ban the importing

21 According to "Beyond Hacktivism: Iran's Coordinated Cyber Threat Landscape," CSIS (January 2026)

of connected cars[22] designed, developed, manufactured, or sold by companies affiliated with China or Russia.

Strategically speaking, the United States announced its Cyber Strategy in March 2026, under which the country will protect its critical infrastructure and identify and disrupt the networks of adversaries through defensive and offensive cyber operations, thereby preventing attacks directed at the United States. The government has also announced a "Zero Trust[23] Strategy" to strengthen cybersecurity at federal agencies, calling on each department and agency to implement security measures based on the Zero Trust model. In addition, the government has announced a National Cyber Workforce and Education Strategy to secure cyber workforce, which sets out its intention to address the long-term issue of acquiring basic cyber skills for the public and reforming cyber education.

In terms of security, the Department of Defense's Cyber Strategy 2023 stated that the department would track the organizations, capabilities, and intentions of attackers, disrupt and degrade malicious cyber activities and defend against them, and support the Unified Combatant Command's operations in the cyber domain and cooperate with allies and related countries to defend against them. In addition, under the National Defense Strategy set forth by the second Trump administration, the Department of War is prioritizing enhanced cyber defense aimed at protecting the U.S. Forces and specific civilian targets, while also developing other options for deterring and weakening cyber threats directed against the U.S. homeland.

At the Japan-U.S. "2+2" Meeting in 2019, the two countries agreed to strengthen cooperation in the field of cyberspace, affirming that international law applies in cyberspace and that a cyberattack could, in certain circumstances, constitute an armed attack for the purposes of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty.

The U.S. Forces include Cyber Command, which was elevated to a Unified Combatant Command in 2018 to control cyberspace operations. The U.S. Cyber Command, with 6,200 personnel, comprises teams that protect the Department of Defense's information networks, monitor and defend against adversary cyber activities and support the Unified Combatant Commands' operations. The U.S. military also conducts operations to defend against and disrupt malicious cyber activities on critical networks in partner nations such as Latvia and Lithuania.

(2) Republic of Korea (ROK)

The ROK has announced a new "National Cyber Security Strategy" in February 2024, which aims to develop offensive cyber defenses and ensure resilience in response to cyber threats from North Korea and other nations, as well as the evolving cyber landscape. In September 2024, the ROK formulated its subordinate document "National Cybersecurity Basic Plan," detailing specific policies for achieving the country's goals.

In terms of national defense, the ROK military established a structure to perform cyber operations led by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2019, while developing a collaborative system among the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Cyber Operations Command and each military branch in enhancing its cyber operations preparedness and ensuring effective response to threats in cyberspace. In addition, during the "Ulchi" exercise in August 2024, government, military, and civilian participants engaged in the first integrated field training aimed at achieving cyber resilience.[24]

(3) Australia

In its "Defence Cyber Security Strategy" released in 2022, the Australian Department of Home Affairs stated that it would achieve mission-focused and state-of-the-art cybersecurity adapted to the cyber threat environment through best practices and partnerships and set action goals such as operational model implementation and capability acquisition. In addition, the "2023-2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy," published in 2023, established a roadmap for Australia to become a global cybersecurity leader by 2030.

In March 2025, the Australian Department of Home Affairs announced "Cyber Security Rules 2025." These rules, which were enforced in March 2026, govern security standards that must be satisfied by all products connected to the Internet in Australia. The standards themselves were introduced based on an order of the Department of Home Affairs, and they are intended to enhance the cybersecurity of smart devices for consumers.

On the organizational front, cybersecurity capabilities across the government have been centralized through the establishment of the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC), which addresses major cybersecurity issues related to government agencies and critical infrastructure. In addition, in 2023, Australia established the National Office of Cyber Security (NOCS) under the jurisdiction of the Australian Department of Home Affairs to handle responsibilities that

22 Refers to automobiles that function as ICT terminals. These vehicles use sensors to acquire various kinds of data, including information on vehicle conditions and surrounding road environments. This data is then collected and analyzed through a network. According to the U.S. Government, while connected cars offer advantages that include the promotion of vehicle stability and driver navigation support, they also pose risks that include the misuse of collected geographic information or sensitive information related to critical infrastructure as well as interference with vehicle operation.

23 This concept is based on the view that human nature is fundamentally evil, with the principle of "Do not trust even insiders and be suspicious of both outsiders and insiders without distinction." Users, equipment such as terminal units, or even access rights arouse suspicion, and if there is a high possibility of spoofing etc., the right to access is immediately suspended. The main targets of this defense are assets such as data or equipment.

24 The ability to respond flexibly and restore operations in cases where command-and-control systems or information-communication networks are partially compromised due to cyberattacks.

include the coordination of cyber policy.

The Australian Defence Force created the Information Warfare Division under the Joint Capabilities Group in 2017 and established the Defence Signals Intelligence and Cyber Command (DSCC) under the division in 2018. In 2019, the Royal Australian Air Force also introduced new cyber skills and commenced the recruitment of personnel specialized in such skills to protect networks, data, information systems, and similar assets.

(4) Europe

The EU announced "EU's Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade" in 2020, which set goals such as revising regulations for resilient infrastructure and essential services and establishing a joint cyber unit across the civilian, diplomatic, police and defense sectors. In addition, the EU announced its Cyber Defense Policy in 2022 to strengthen the EU's ability to protect its citizens and infrastructure. In 2024, the EU enforced the Cyber Resilience Act to safeguard consumers and businesses by imposing cybersecurity requirements on all products that are directly or indirectly connected to either other devices or networks.

At the NATO Summit in 2014, an agreement was reached indicating that NATO's collective defense applies to cyberattacks against member states. In addition, at the NATO Summit in 2024, an agreement was reached to establish the new NATO Integrated Cyber Defence Centre. The purpose of the new center is to attempt to integrate various existing cyber-related functions, thereby increasing situational awareness and enhancing collective resilience and defense in cyberspace.

Furthermore, in 2008, the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) was authorized to serve as a research and training institution. The CCDCOE published the Tallinn Manual 2.0 on international law applicable to cyber operations in 2017, and an initiative to revise the manual to version 3.0 is ongoing. In 2025, the CCDCOE held the cyber defense exercise "Locked Shields 2025," and NATO held the cyber defense exercise "Cyber Coalition," in which NATO member states as well as Japan participated.

In its National Cyber Strategy published in 2021, the United Kingdom set out strategic objectives such as detection, disruption and deterrence of adversaries. In addition, the "National Cyber Force: Responsible Cyber Warfare Practices," published in 2023, stated that it would disrupt terrorist activities, counter APT threats and mitigate election interference and would pursue efforts to enhance the National Cyber Force's scale, capabilities and functional integration going forward.

Moving on, France, under its "National Cybersecurity Strategy for 2026-2030," which was announced in January 2026, is working on enhancing its national resilience by increasing the overall level of cybersecurity, enhancing its critical and digital infrastructure, and utilizing judicial, diplomatic, military, economic, and technological resources to mitigate cyber threats while also enhancing cooperation with the private sector by sharing threat information.

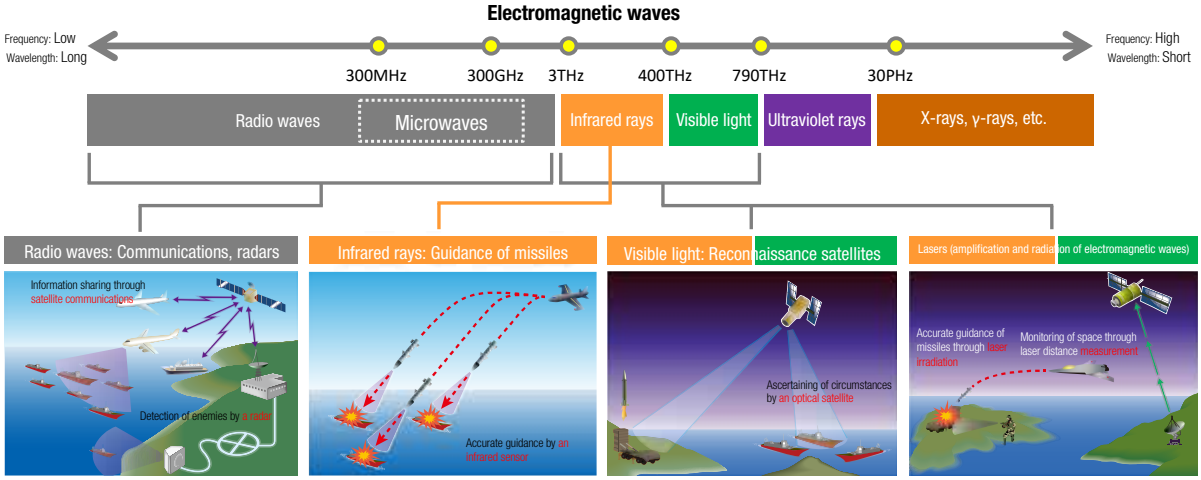
3 Trends in Electromagnetic Domain

1 Electromagnetic Domain and Security

The electromagnetic spectrum is used in various everyday applications, including televisions, mobile communications and global positioning systems (GPS). In the military field, the electromagnetic spectrum is used for command-and-control communications equipment, radar systems for detecting enemies, missile guidance systems and other equipment. Securing superiority in the electromagnetic domain is indispensable for modern operations. Activities using the electromagnetic domain include electronic warfare (EW) and electromagnetic spectrum management. The means and methods of EW are generally classified into three categories: electronic attack (EA), electronic protection (EP), and electronic warfare support (ES).

See Fig. I-4-3-4 (How to Use the Electromagnetic Domain in the Defense Field)

Fig. I-4-3-4 How to Use the Electromagnetic Domain in the Defense Field



EA involves jamming electromagnetic waves emitted from the adversary's communications equipment or radar by emitting strong electromagnetic waves or fake electromagnetic waves mimicking those emitted by the adversary, thereby reducing or disabling the adversary's communications and search capabilities. Electronic jamming includes electromagnetic interference (jamming), electromagnetic wave deception (spoofing), and physical destruction using high-power electromagnetic waves (such as lasers and microwaves).

EP includes thwarting detection by adversaries and reducing or neutralizing adversary EA against communications and radar equipment by changing the frequency of electromagnetic waves used or increasing their power.

ES consists of activities designed to collect information relating to electromagnetic waves used by adversaries. To effectively achieve EA and EP, it is necessary to continuously monitor and analyze what kinds of electromagnetic waves are used and how by the adversary's communications equipment, radar, and EA aircraft.

Electromagnetic spectrum management is to grasp how electromagnetic waves are used in the battle area and to appropriately adjust frequencies, directions and durations of electromagnetic waves used by friendly forces and equipment to avoid electromagnetic wave interference.

Major countries recognize EA as an asymmetric means of attack similar to cyberattacks that effectively prevent adversaries from demonstrating their military capabilities. They are also placing importance on and enhancing their EW capabilities, including the ability to carry out EA.

See 4-2 (High-Power Energy Weapons); Part III, Chapter 1, Section 1-1-6 (Responses in the Electromagnetic Spectrum Domain); Part III, Chapter 1, Section 2-4-3 (Electromagnetic Spectrum Domain)

2 Each Country's EW Initiatives

(1) The United States

In its "Electromagnetic Spectrum Superiority Strategy" announced in 2020, the United States states that ensuring freedom of action in the electromagnetic spectrum, at the time, place and parameters of its choosing, is a prerequisite for successful operations across all domains. In 2021, an implementation plan for the strategy was approved, which—the United States says—paves the way for initiatives such as establishing procedures to develop, integrate and strengthen integrated electromagnetic spectrum operations and develop guidance for acquiring electromagnetic spectrum capabilities.

The U.S. Army has deployed a Multi-Domain Task Force with space, cyberspace, and EW functions in the U.S. homeland (2017), Germany (2021), and Hawaii (2023). Furthermore, in 2021, the U.S. Air Force established the 350th Spectrum Warfare Wing to operate and maintain electronic warfare. In 2023, the Strategic Command officially opened the "Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations Center," which is intended to serve as the center of the U.S. military's electromagnetic spectrum operations, including force management, planning and situational monitoring. It conducts a space-domain EW exercise called "Black Skies," and a command-and-control exercise under electromagnetic interference called "Heavy Rain."

(2) China

The Chinese military considers EW to be an essential element of modern warfare. It appears that the Chinese military seeks to achieve information dominance in a conflict by aligning EW and cyber warfare to protect its own information networks and prevent the enemy from using the electromagnetic spectrum.[25]

The Chinese military's EW strategy is reportedly focused on suppressing, degrading, disrupting and deceiving enemy electronic equipment. Its EW units are said to be routinely training to conduct jamming and anti-jamming operations against multiple communication and radar systems and GPS receivers during exercises, which are believed to evaluate operational units' proficiency in EW weapons and other aspects.[26]

On the organizational front, the Strategic Support Force, which is considered to have been responsible for EW, was dissolved in April 2024, and its subordinate Aerospace Force and Cyberspace Force were reportedly elevated to service arms. The Cyberspace Force now appears to be responsible for EW.[27]

In addition, it has been reported that China has deployed electronic jamming equipment on Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea,[28] and, around Japan, flights by Y-8 and Y-9 EW aircraft and other aircraft have been confirmed.

(3) Russia

Russia, in its Military Doctrine, regards EW equipment as one type of critical equipment in modern military conflicts. Moreover, according to a Russian military organ's contributed article of April 2021, Russia will ensure superiority in weapon guidance as well as force command by improving EW technology and expanding equipment, in response to the technological superiority of developed countries that have advanced information and communication technology.

In the Russian EW units, there are reportedly five EW brigades.[29] They mainly consist of the Land Forces and possess multiple types of EW equipment. Furthermore, Russia is developing and deploying EW systems equipped with AI, such as the EW system Bylina, which controls many pieces of EW equipment in an integrated manner, and the EW system Palantin, which reportedly can interfere with radio communications and electronic reconnaissance systems within a radius of 1,000 km.

During Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Russia's EW equipment appears to have been effective in interfering with the flight of Ukrainian UAVs[30] and degrading the guidance accuracy of GPS-guided missiles from Ukraine. In addition, to protect against Ukrainian UAVs, Russia is installing jammers on armored vehicles and taking measures to suppress UAV communications.

(4) Europe

In 2023, the EU announced the "2023 EU Capability Development Priorities," which laid out the policy for developing defense capabilities and cited the superiority of electromagnetic spectrum operations as strategic enablers and the importance of the ability to plan and coordinate electromagnetic spectrum operations.

At NATO, the NATO Electronic Warfare Advisory Committee (NEWAC) fulfills the role of the principal forum for consultation and coordination of electromagnetic warfare, providing advice and recommendations to the NATO Military Committee. At the plenary meeting held in November 2024, the importance of achieving electromagnetic superiority in modern warfare was emphasized, recognizing that the widespread use of EW in Ukraine and in the Middle East demonstrates that it has become a crucial domain in modern warfare.

4 Trends in Cutting-Edge Technology

1 Hypersonic Weapons

The United States, China, Russia and others are developing hypersonic weapons, including hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs) that would be mounted on ballistic missiles, maneuvered to glide at hypersonic speed (Mach 5 or above) in the atmosphere and hit targets, as well as hypersonic cruise missiles (HCMs) using scramjet engines and other technologies that enable hypersonic flights. It is suggested that hypersonic weapons would fly in lower orbits than conventional ballistic missiles at hypersonic speed for a longer period of time and that their high maneuverability would make them difficult to be detected and intercepted.

(1) The United States

A senior official in the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) mentioned a development plan for hypersonic weapons in February 2021, revealing that the United States will deploy hypersonic weapons in the early to mid-2020s and build

25 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)
26 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)
27 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)
28 According to "An Accounting of China's Deployments to the Spratly Islands," CSIS (May 2018)
29 According to "All quiet on the eastern front: EW in Russia's new-generation warfare," Jane's International Defence Review (April 2018)
30 According to "Meatgrinder: Russian Tactics in the Second Year of Its Invasion of Ukraine" (2023), Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies

defense capabilities in the mid to late 2020s.[31] In 2021, the U.S. Army received a prototype HGV known as the Long Range Hypersonic Weapon (LRHW). Test launches were conducted successfully in June and December of 2024, but it has been reported that there have been delays in the deployment plan, which was initially supposed to be by the end of 2025. In addition, the U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force are developing hypersonic weapons, and the U.S. Navy is aiming to equip their Zumwalt-class destroyers and Virginia-class nuclear-powered submarines with them.

In addition, in response to the threat of such hypersonic missiles, the United States is working with Japan to jointly develop glide phase interceptors (GPIs), missiles that intercept hypersonic missiles during their glide phase.

See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 2-2-2 (Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF)

(2) China

In China, the DF-17 ballistic missile, which is viewed as having the capability to carry HGVs, made its first public appearance during the military parade marking the 70th anniversary of China's founding in October 2019. The U.S. Department of War has pointed out that China began operating DF-17 missiles in 2020 and has also stated that DF-27 ballistic missiles might be equipped with HGVs.[32] Moreover, at the military parade in September 2025, in addition to CJ-1000, which is said to be an HCM, the ship-launched missiles YJ-17, said to be an HGV, and YJ-19, said to be an HCM, were showcased for the first time.

(3) Russia

Russia has already deployed the HGV Avangard. It has been pointed out that flight tests of the new Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), which is believed to be capable of carrying the Avangard, may have successively failed between 2023 and 2025. However, in May 2026, the Russian Government announced a successful launch, and the missile is believed to be scheduled to be deployed by the end of 2026. In addition, Russia successfully test-launched the HCM Zircon from a submarine in 2021 and deployed a Zircon-equipped frigate on combat patrol missions in 2023. In February 2024, President Vladimir Putin stated for the first time that the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (AFRF) had used Zircon missiles in Ukraine. The Zircon has already been deployed to naval units, and, in September 2025, Russia conducted launch training during "Zapad 2025," a joint military exercise with Belarus.

(4) North Korea

North Korea seems to regard the development of hypersonic gliding warheads as one of its priority goals and is promoting related research and development. It has been launching missiles it calls "hypersonic missiles" since 2021.

See Chapter 3, Section 4-1-3 (3) (Missile Forces)

2 High-Power Energy Weapons

High-power energy weapons, such as railguns, high-power laser weapons, and high-power microwave weapons, are being developed as a means to counter various airborne threats.

A railgun is a kind of weapon that shoots bullets using a magnetic field generated from electrical energy. Unlike missiles, the bullets used for railguns have no propulsion device. For this reason, the bullets are smaller, cost less, and require less space for storing. Therefore, railguns are said to be capable of coping effectively with attacks involving a large number of missiles.

Laser weapons, which use high-power laser energy to destroy targets, are being developed by the United States, China, Russia and other countries as low-cost, effective means of intercepting a large number of small UAVs and small vessels.

High-power microwave weapons are weapons to destroy or cause the malfunction of electronic equipment in UAVs, missiles, and the like.

(1) The United States

The United States is developing several laser weapons. In June 2025, the U.S. Army conducted a live-fire test of the 50kW-class vehicle-mounted laser weapon DE M-SHORAD (Directed Energy Maneuver-Short Range Air Defense) by targeting a UAV swarm, which resulted in the swarm being successfully neutralized. In addition, in 2023, the United States concluded a contract to develop 300kW-class laser weapons. In 2022, the U.S. Navy also equipped the Arleigh Burke-class missile destroyer USS Preble with the 60kW-class laser weapon HELIOS (High Energy Laser and Integrated Optical-dazzler with Surveillance), and, in January 2026, it used this to successfully fire at and neutralize four UAVs. Note that the plan is to eventually increase the output of HELIOS to 150kW, which will make it effective against UAVs that do not have exposed sensors or engines.

Regarding high-power microwave weapons, in 2023, the U.S. Air Force used the high-power microwave weapon

31 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)
32 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)

THOR (Tactical High-power Operational Responder) against numerous UAVs to simulate swarm flights, effectively disabling many of them. The U.S. Marine Corps is also assessing the integration of AI-based UAV detection and tracking capabilities with high-power microwave weapons.

(2) China

China unveiled the LW-60, a vehicle-mounted laser weapon with an unknown power output that is designed to counter small UAVs, at the 2024 China International Aviation & Aerospace Exhibition. There are also indications that China has deployed anti-satellite laser weapons that appear to be designed to interfere with or damage the optical sensors of low-earth orbit satellites and that it is developing laser weapons with even higher power output.

(3) Russia

Russia has deployed the 10kW-class Peresvet laser weapon system, and it is reportedly developing a megawatt-class chemical laser weapon system for attacking satellites.

(4) Israel

In September 2025, Israel finished developing the Iron Beam, a vehicle-mounted air defense laser weapon with a 100 kW-class power output, and the country demonstrated that the weapon is capable of intercepting rockets, mortar rounds, UAVs, and a wide range of other threats while also announcing the successful completion of a series of related tests. In December 2025, the Iron Beam was given to the first unit to ever use it, and Israel plans to deploy the new weapon to more units.

(5) The United Kingdom

In November 2025, the U.K. Ministry of Defence announced that it had used the DragonFire laser, its first ever high-power laser weapon, to successfully shoot down a UAV flying at a speed of 650 km/h. The DragonFire laser is inexpensive to fire, costing just £10 per shot, and it is apparently accurate enough to hit a target the size of a £1 coin from a kilometer away. In addition, the United Kingdom has already concluded contracts for Royal Navy Type 45 destroyers to be outfitted with the new weapon in 2027. The United Kingdom is also considering equipping British Army vehicles and Royal Air Force fighter aircraft with the laser.[33]

3 AI Technology

AI technology is one area where rapid development is taking place, including generative AI, which can generate natural text and images in response to instructions, AI agents that can autonomously analyze information necessary to achieve objectives and act accordingly, and physical AI systems that use AI as a brain in combination with a physical body in the real world to take autonomous action and learn. It has been pointed out that this rapid AI progress has been exerting a great impact on the military field, including its applications for UAVs and the cyber domain as well as support for command and decision-making and improving data processing capabilities.

(1) Utilization of AI to Support Command and Decision-Making, Etc.

a. The United States and Europe

One example of AI utilization in the United States is the use of the AI-powered Maven Smart System developed through the Project Maven initiative advanced by the U.S. Army to enable the rapid assessment of combat spaces, collection of large volumes of data, and analysis of the collected data using AI to identify and attack targets. In May 2024, the U.S. Department of Defense announced a contract with a private company to develop the system, and, in 2025, the contract amount limit up through 2029 was increased to approximately USD 1.3 billion. In addition, in April 2025, NATO also announced that it had agreed to a contract to purchase this system.[34]

b. China

China announced in 2020 that an AI Military Simulation Competition was held by the Central Military Commission with the purpose of researching and developing next-generation command information systems. The U.S. DoD has pointed out that China's goal is to pass Western countries in terms of AI research and development by 2025 and to become the world's leader in the AI field by 2030.[35]

c. Israel

Meanwhile, it has also been pointed out that, during its clashes with Palestinian militants in 2023, Israel used the AI system called "Lavender" to select attack targets in Gaza. Some have also suggested that Israel is using AI to analyze the data from communication apps installed on the smartphones and other devices of Gaza citizens to evaluate whether, for example, the owners of those smartphones have relationships with Hamas, etc. It has been pointed out that, during this conflict, Israel has also used the AI system Gospel to provide support related to selecting and prioritizing physical attack targets. It

33 According to "Boost for Armed Forces as new laser weapon takes down high-speed drones," U.K. Government website (GOV.UK) (November 2025)
34 According to "NATO ACQUIRES AI-ENABLED WARFIGHTING SYSTEM," NATO website (April 2025)
35 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2024)

has also been reported that the Israel Defense Forces have stated that they do not use AI to identify terrorist operatives or to predict whether someone might be an operative.

(2) Utilization of AI for Unmanned Systems

Different nations are developing unmanned systems powered by AI.

a. The United States

The United States has been engaged in diverse research and development initiatives, including the automation of air-to-air combat, manned and unmanned aerial vehicle formation flights, and the demonstration of capabilities in maritime surveillance missions. In 2023, the U.S. Air Force conducted tests involving formation flights between AI-piloted XQ-58A UAVs and manned aerial vehicles as well as tactical flights intended to handle simulated missions, weapons, and enemies. During the same year, they also announced the Replicator 1 initiative, which is aimed at introducing thousands of inexpensive autonomous systems that utilize AI. In addition, in September 2024, the United States announced the Replicator 2 initiative, which is focused on countering the threat of UAVs.

b. China

China revealed in May 2018 that the China Electronics Technology Group Corporation successfully performed a swarm flight of 200 AI-powered UAVs. It is assumed that military operations including such swarm flights will become difficult to counter with conventional air defense systems. In 2023, an AI algorithm competition assuming UAV aerial combat was held in China.

In addition, it has been pointed out that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been utilizing its DeepSeek AI model, a generative AI model specialized in natural language processing that was developed by a Chinese company and offers high performance and low costs, for UAVs. For example, it has been pointed out that DeepSeek technology has been integrated into a military vehicle announced in February 2025, which is capable of autonomously conducting combat support operations at a speed of 50 km/h.

c. Russia

In 2019, Russia conducted a coordinated flight test between the S-70 Okhotnik, which is a heavy UAV, and the fifth-generation fighter aircraft Su-57. In June 2023, the Okhotnik was used for the first time during Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and, in October 2024, it was reportedly shot down over Donetsk oblast in eastern Ukraine.

In addition, the Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine has reported that, since February 2025, Russia has been operating AI-powered UAVs known as V2Us. It has also been reported that these UAVs use AI to autonomously search for and select targets.[36]

(3) Discussion of LAWS and the Military Use of AI

Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), including the military use of AI, have been discussed since 2014 under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). In addition, in 2023, as part of efforts to respond to increased military use of AI for purposes not limited to weapons, the Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (REAIM) Call to Action, which confirmed responsible use in accordance with obligations under international law, as well as the Political Declaration on Responsible Military Use of Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy, which confirmed the need to operate AI under a responsible human chain of command and control and to clarify responsibility, were announced. Similarly, in 2024, the REAIM Blueprint for Action was announced, and, in 2026, the REAIM Pathways to Action were announced. Japan expressed its support for all these announcements.

4 Quantum Technology

Quantum technology is positioned as an important dual-use technology that brings innovation to society by applying quantum mechanics, which operates in the microscopic world of atomic nuclei and electrons, and it is expected to be utilized in all domains, including the land, sea, air, space, and cyber domains.[37]

In its National Defense Science and Technology Strategy published in 2023, the United States cited quantum technology as key and declared its intention to strengthen collaboration and technological innovation with its allies.

In its 15th Five-Year Plan, which was formulated in March 2026, China expressed its plan to proactively invest in quantum technology and other future industries to develop them and ensure that they grow considerably.

In addition, in January 2024, NATO announced its first quantum technology strategy, outlining how quantum technology can be applied to defense and security.

(1) Quantum Cryptographic Communication

Quantum cryptographic communication, which is considered to be cryptographic communication that cannot be deciphered by a third party, is being studied in many countries. China

36 According to "BARRAGE MUNITION WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE V2U," Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine website
37 According to "Military and Security Dimensions of Quantum Technologies," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) (July 2025)

has built a 4,600 km quantum cryptographic communication network consisting of the quantum cryptographic communication satellite Mozi and a ground communication network between Beijing and Shanghai. In 2022, quantum encryption services were provided to the Communist Party and government agencies in Hefei. In addition, in July 2022, China launched its Jinan-1 quantum-secured microsatellite, which costs 1/20th as much as the Mozi. In March 2025, China announced that it had used its Jinan-1 satellite to achieve quantum-key distribution between South Africa and a station in Beijing, located 12,900 km apart.

(2) Quantum Sensing

Quantum sensing enables the extremely sensitive measurement of magnetic fields, electric fields, temperatures, acceleration, and other physical quantities, and it has been pointed out that, in the future, this technology could be used for tracking missiles and aircraft as well as for more advanced gyros and accelerometers.[38] Quantum sensing is therefore expected to improve ISR capabilities by improving detection capabilities and enhancing resistance to jamming.

In 2023, the United States successfully demonstrated magnetic navigation using quantum magnetic sensors as an alternative to the GPS and has also been developing a satellite equipped with quantum gyros to develop inertial navigation using quantum inertial sensors.

In April 2025, China demonstrated a picotesla-class (sensitivity on the order of one ten-trillionth) quantum magnetometer equipped to a UAV to detect submarines.

(3) Quantum Computers

Quantum computers are said to be able to quickly solve problems that would take even a supercomputer an enormous amount of time, and, because they might already have the ability to crack widely used encryption methods, they could have a major impact on the confidentiality of communication.

In addition, quantum computers are expected to be used to support complex optimizations, including SDA, operational logistic support, and the control of UAVs, and to be utilized for simulations related to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) defense. On the other hand, the possibility of transitioning to post-quantum cryptography (PQC), which is difficult to decrypt using quantum computers, continues to be researched in many countries, and the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) announced the first PQC standards in August 2024. In the EU, the European Commission has requested that member states formulate strategies aimed at transitioning to PQC. In June 2025, the European Commission announced a roadmap related to this, based on which the goal is for the EU's important systems to finish transitioning to PQC by the end of 2030. Note that China has introduced PQC and is apparently researching its own algorithm that differs from the NIST standards.

5 Additive Manufacturing Technology

Additive manufacturing technology, as typified by 3D printers, is expected to be applied to each military sector in various countries, due to low manufacturing cost and parts procurement that does not rely on inventory.

The United States, in announcing the "Use of Additive Manufacturing Technology" in 2021, stated that it would enhance the independence and readiness of its military services and has installed 3D printers on some of its surface ships and submarines. As an example of an initiative pursued by a specific military branch, the U.S. Army utilizes additive manufacturing technology to proactively resolve supply shortages, and field units also use this technology to manufacture metal parts on site, thereby eliminating the need to transport them. In addition, to train personnel in the use of sophisticated manufacturing technologies, the United States is significantly enhancing training courses related to them.[39]

China is also utilizing 3D printers to manufacture parts for military aircraft. Ukraine is similarly utilizing 3D printers to manufacture UAV parts, etc.

5 Trends in the Cognitive Dimension

Information warfare in the international community begins even before the outbreak of conflict, as it aims to shape a favorable security environment by influencing people's perception through disinformation and strategic messaging, thereby affecting public opinion and decision-making in other countries, while also preventing external influence on one's own decision-making.

For example, as has been pointed out in the cases of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the 2023 clashes between Israel and the Palestinian militants, and the presidential elections

38 According to the website of the U.S. Department of Defense on February 23, 2021

39 According to "Transforming Advanced Manufacturing Within the Ordnance Corps," U.S. Army website (January 2025)

in Taiwan and the United States, concerns over information warfare, including the dissemination of disinformation and the proliferation of information aimed at eroding trust in the target government or dividing society using social media and influencers, have been growing. In particular, in recent years, advances in AI technology are making deepfakes and generative AI-created videos, images, and documents even more of a serious threat, as they are highly realistic and can be created in a short time with inexpensive, easily accessible tools.

It is believed that Russia and China are waging information warfare both domestically and abroad, aiming to build an information environment favorable to them. It has also been noted that China is spending billions of dollars to promote propaganda, spread disinformation, and conduct censorship by investing in the media of other countries. In addition, the U.S. Department of War has pointed out that China has positioned cognitive-dimension operations as a core element of its so-called "pressure campaign" against Taiwan, with the aim of weakening Taiwan's will to resist China and deepening social divisions there. In addition, China utilizes the infosphere to disseminate specific political narratives, adversely affect the Taiwanese people, and emphasize activities of the PLA around Taiwan.[40]

Meanwhile, ever since Russia's aggression against Ukraine started, Russia has been expanding its range of information-based influence operations as part of its hybrid warfare efforts, and it has been reported that the country is even using agents stationed in other countries. For example, it has been reported that Russia is cooperating with influencers and the like in Africa while also working with the private military company Wagner to spread disinformation. It has also been reported that, in September 2025, Russia manipulated information related to the parliamentary election in Moldova to interfere in it. There is a concern that China and Russia are cooperating to spread propaganda and disinformation.

To respond to such threats, in Europe, the EU has proposed the concept of Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) and is working on countermeasures. In addition, in 2023, NATO formulated the Allied Joint Doctrines (AJP-10 and AJP-10.1), which spell out the organization's thinking and practical approach regarding strategic communication (SC) and information operations. In September 2025, the U.K. Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), in its response to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.K. Parliament, identified Russia, China, and other countries as engaging in malicious information activities. Similarly, starting in October 2024, the United Kingdom announced sanctions on organizations and individuals involved in FIMI linked to Russia.

In addition, there have been many examples of information warfare targeting Japan, including the spread of malicious narratives, disinformation, and propaganda, such as attempts to alienate Japan from Western countries and cause a loss of trust in the Japanese Government, including the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF). In response to this situation, the Defense Intelligence Headquarters plays a central role in terms of handling information warfare for the Ministry of Defense and the JSDF, and the policy and operational divisions are also working together to accelerate related efforts.

40 According to the annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," U.S. DoD (2025)

Perspective

The Battle in the Cognitive Dimension

YAMAGUCHI Shinji, Senior Fellow, China Division, National Institute for Defense Studies

In recent years, the battle in the cognitive dimension has intensified, with countries attempting to disrupt and have an impact on the politics and societies of adversary countries through information manipulation and influence operations. China and Russia are attempting to take advantage of the characteristics of free and open political and social systems in democratic countries to disrupt the politics of adversary countries and lead them in a direction which is desirable for themselves, by carrying out information manipulation using disinformation and other techniques and influence operations against the democratic countries.

As part of such techniques, China carries out promotion, propaganda, information manipulation on social media, and united front (influence) operations. Promotion and propaganda refer to activities by China's state-controlled media, such as Xinhua News Agency and others, to communicate the narrative of China to the world, transmit government views and Chinese culture, and rebut the propaganda of foreign countries.

Next, there is the spread of disinformation through social media and other channels. We are seeing cases in which the governments of other countries deliberately spread disinformation with the aim of causing disruption and division in the domestic politics and societies of adversary countries. China is also expanding these kinds of activities.

Its united front operations are one type of influence operation to create external collaborators in order to achieve the political goals of the Chinese Communist Party. It targets people who are favorable to the Chinese government, who hold views close to China on certain issues, and who have cultural or ethnic ties to China, and attempts to lead them in a direction advantageous to China's political objectives.

What China is trying to achieve through these activities is, firstly, to enhance China's image and expand support for its policies; secondly, to rebut the claims and information of foreign countries that are disadvantageous to China; and thirdly, to increase social divisions and create political and social disruption in adversary countries. The targets of China's operations are mainly Taiwan and the countries in the Global South. China is aiming to disrupt politics in Taiwan and form advantageous conditions for itself and is scheming to increase support for itself by trumpeting the shortcomings and problems of the United States and Europe to the Global South countries.

It has been thought that China has not been directing its activities against Japan very actively, but recently, these activities have been intensifying. In particular, since President Xi Jinping mentioned the "historical ties between Fujian Province and Okinawa" in June 2023, China's operations surrounding Okinawa Prefecture have intensified. The number of Chinese government and party officials visiting Okinawa Prefecture is increasing, and activities such as fake accounts on social media attempting to spread false videos inciting "Ryukyu independence" have been seen.

The activities of China, Russia, and others have not necessarily been highly effective. However, this kind of cognitive warfare can pose a serious challenge to democracy as it attempts to incite division by taking advantage of areas of disagreement in the adversary's politics and society. It is necessary for various government departments, companies, and society as a whole to cooperate to respond to it.

(Note) This column is an independent analysis from the researcher's academic perspective, and its contents do not represent an official government position.

Perspective

New Ways of Warfare in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Era

Colonel KAWAMURA Kouki, Senior Fellow, Global Security Division, National Institute for Defense Studies

As long as you have a smartphone, you can exchange messages and videos with people from all over the world at anytime and from anywhere. For this to happen, there needs to be a communication facility within signal range close by. A prime example of an operation that took advantage of this kind of information infrastructure for smart devices was Ukraine's Operation Spiderweb (June 2025), which targeted military bases deep within Russia's vast territory.

During the operation, drone operators in Ukraine carried out a simultaneous attack on multiple Russian military bases located as far as 1,000 to 5,000 kilometers away using 117 small drones. Known as Osa (Ukrainian for "wasp"), the drones destroyed numerous large bombers and other equipment (causing damage estimated in the region of 1.03 trillion yen). So, how were these small drones with a range of only 10 or so kilometers able to attack Russian military bases located thousands of kilometers away?

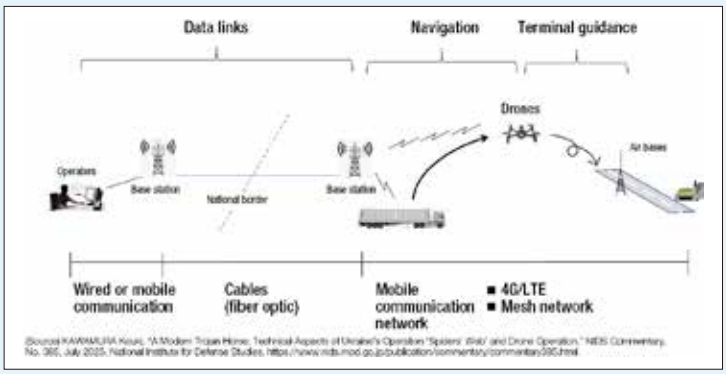
The first step was to hide dozens of drones in the roofs of storage containers on the back of large trailers, which were driven to within a 10-kilometer radius of the targets by drivers recruited locally in Russia. It has been reported that the drones, equipped with the same type of SIM card used in cell phones, were capable of being remotely controlled from within Ukraine, located thousands of kilometers away, through control signals received via Russia's mobile communication network (4G/LTE networks we use each day) (see figure). In addition, GNSS receivers were also necessary for enabling operators to track information on the drones' positions in real time.

Remote control using standard mobile networks can be affected by traffic signal delays and radio interference. For this reason, drones were equipped with open-source flight control software available to the public (ArduPilot). This meant that drones could stably maintain autopilot operation along a pre-set flight path. In addition to flight stabilization, drones were also equipped with a "fail-safe" function that would activate in the event of traffic signal delays or a drop in communication.

Since the drones were being flown over enemy territory, it was naturally anticipated that they would be subject to radio jamming from the Russian side. To combat this, drones were equipped with a pre-trained AI module. Consequently, even if a drone was no longer under an operator's control, the module's object recognition algorithm enabled autonomous terminal guidance, meaning that the drone could identify target vulnerabilities pre-trained in advance. A computer is required to run the AI module, so the Osa drones were equipped with Raspberry Pi 5s (commonly known in Japan as "Razu-pai"), a micro PC about the size of a business card.

Operation Spiderweb was so named because it extended so far into Russia's territory; places that were once believed to be beyond the reach of Ukraine's offensive capabilities. What made this possible was the ability to use Russia's domestic mobile communications network. This contrivance is achievable just by connecting a SIM card to a computer via USB memory (dongle). In fact, it has been reported that Russian Forces are also leveraging local mobile communication networks in the country's almost daily airstrikes on Ukraine.

With just a smartphone, we can enjoy the convenience of communication from anywhere in the world. In the same way, provided they can be covertly transported close to their target, small drones equipped with microcomputers and SIM cards can be used for sabotage operations, regardless of the origin or destination. With such examples of recent conflicts, it feels like we are being compelled to face this new reality.



System Configuration of Drone Operation

(Note) This column is an independent analysis from the researcher's academic perspective, and its contents do not represent an official government position.

Section 4 Trends Concerning Defense Production and Technological Bases

Advanced technologies based on significant technological advances in the civilian field have so much power that they can completely change the way battles happen. Relative merits in industry and technology greatly influence national security. Under these circumstances, many countries are taking on a variety of initiatives in order to maintain and enhance their national defense production and technological bases.

First of all, each country enhances investments in defense research and development to ensure technological superiority. For example, about half of the nearly 31 trillion yen invested in the government research expenditure[1] of the United States is paid out by the Department of War (DoW).

In addition, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), an internal organization of the DoW, has requested a budget of USD 4,916 million for FY2026[2] to continue active investments in innovative research at companies and universities, etc., with the aim of maintaining the U.S. Forces' technological superiority.

In addition, the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) mediates between companies owning innovative technology and the DoW to make the most of cutting-edge technologies from the civilian field in the resolution of challenges in the security sector. The DIU has produced contracts with 450 companies mainly in six fields, including artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous technology, and the cyber field. In FY2023, the DIU moved ten consumer solutions suggested by companies from the prototype stage to the production stage.[3]

Meanwhile, China is promoting civil-military fusion as its national strategy, and, in May 2025, the country published a white paper titled "China's National Security in the New Era," in which the country positioned the development of emerging fields (including networks, data, AI, biological, and nuclear technologies) as new fields relevant to national security, while also indicating that the accelerated development of advanced technologies will have a serious impact on the security environment.[4]

In response to the recent utilization of dual-use technologies in defense equipment development, the governments of the United Kingdom and Australia as well as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have been funding innovative research and development in the private sector to acquire advanced civilian technology. Through UK Defence Innovation (UKDI), which was established within the Ministry of Defence in July 2025, the United Kingdom plans to invest 400 million pounds or more per year (approximately 76.8 billion yen) in innovative defense companies.[5]

In addition, in September 2024, Australia formulated the Defence Innovation, Science and Technology Strategy (IS&T Strategy). Under this strategy, the Department of Defence has established its ten-year vision, which is to pursue an integrated, safe approach for engaging in close cooperation with industry, universities, research institutes, and international partners to develop the country's IS&T capabilities, transition them to operational use, and to provide asymmetric capabilities to the Australian Defence Force.[6] Meanwhile, NATO established the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) in April 2022 with the aim of enabling member states to work with the private sector and academia to make advanced new technologies available for Western security. In December 2025, NATO announced that it had selected 150 leading companies from 24 NATO member states to participate in the 2026 Challenge Programme. These companies will develop dual-use technologies in response to ten important defense and security-related challenges indicated by NATO (including energy, space operations, and unmanned systems).[7]

In addition, various nations are proactively promoting the application of AI, quantum, semiconductor, and other advanced technologies to national security as well as related management.

Regarding AI technologies, in January 2026, the U.S. DoW announced the Artificial Intelligence Acceleration Strategy. This strategy positions AI as a destructive technology and calls for all units to become AI-first combat units so as to enable the United States to rapidly achieve military-AI dominance. To achieve this, it is necessary not only to integrate AI into existing workflows but also to meaningfully incorporate AI into the development of tactics, fighting skills, and warfare approaches as well as equipment testing processes and military exercises.[8] In August 2025, China announced its intention to accelerate its implementation of the AI Plus initiative, identifying three stages of objectives to achieve by 2035 and proposing the development of new quality productive forces and an intelligent society while deeply fusing AI with all social and economic fields. In addition, in

1 According to a website related to the Science and Engineering Indicators of the U.S. National Science Foundation
2 According to DARPA budget request materials for FY2026
3 According to the DIU website
4 China announced "China's National Security in the New Era" in 2025.
5 According to the U.K. Government website and a RUSI report
6 According to the website of the Australian Department of Defence
7 According to the NATO website
8 According to instructions from the U.S. Secretary of War

July 2025, China expressed its support for the Global South to help ensure universal access to AI.[9]

Various nations are also pursuing research and development related to quantum technologies, including quantum computing and quantum cryptographic communication. In 2018, the United States established the National Quantum Initiative (NQI) Act, and then the U.S. Senate introduced a bill to reauthorize it in January 2026. Based on the NQI Act, the federal government is promoting initiatives to pursue research and development related to quantum information science in cooperation with industries and academia. In connection with this, as phase 2 of the Quantum Benchmarking Initiative (QBI), DARPA has published research results on applications that could have an impact on the quantum advantage.[10] In China, during a speech given by President Xi Jinping in June 2024, he stated that quantum technology is a Chinese priority and that the government is offering various kinds of large-scale support. In terms of quantum computing, China also introduced the Tianyan-504, a 504-qubit superconducting quantum computer, during the same year. Similarly, in terms of quantum cryptographic communication, China has already introduced its Quantum Experiments at Space Scale (QUESS) project, and, in 2027, the country plans to launch a high Earth orbit quantum communication satellite as part of its efforts to achieve long-range communication.[11]

Moving on, various nations are treating advanced semiconductors as important strategic goods. In July 2025, the United States established the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). This act is aimed at helping the United States to expand its semiconductor manufacturing base by expanding tax credits related to investment in semiconductor manufacturing facilities and equipment while also offering preferential treatment related to associated depreciation.[12] Meanwhile, the European Union (EU) has enforced the European Chips Act, which positions semiconductors as essential for economics, social functions, defense, and national security. This act promotes capacity building aimed at enabling next-generation semiconductor technology design, manufacturing, and system integration.[13]

Furthermore, the foreign countries recognize the defense production base as an essential element of national defense and organize the systems to implement their policies through the publication of policy documents related to defense industry policies and the establishment of organizations in charge of the defense industry. They also take on a variety of initiatives such as supporting the participation of domestic companies in government programs and promoting exports to sustain and strengthen their defense production base.

In the National Defense Industrial Strategy (NDIS), which was announced in January 2024, the United States set out four long-term strategic priorities to build a strong defense industrial base fit for the times: resilient supply chains, workforce readiness, flexible acquisition, and economic deterrence. The United States also outlined its intention to promote various initiatives to achieve these priorities, such as strengthening cooperation with allies and friendly nations, providing financial support to companies, and improving procurement methods. In addition, in October 2024, to achieve the NDIS, the United States announced its Implementation Plan, which includes six initiatives, such as enhancing the deterrence through investment in the Indo-Pacific region. In November 2025, the second Trump administration announced its Acquisition Transformation Strategy, based on which the United States is striving to shift its equipment acquisition method to a wartime approach, more promptly deploy new technologies and advanced capabilities, and strengthen its industrial base.

Meanwhile, in September 2025, the United Kingdom formulated the Defence Industrial Strategy to secure an industrial base that enables the implementation of its Strategic Defence Review, which was announced in June 2025. This strategy encapsulates the United Kingdom's efforts to make defense an engine for growth to support employment, industry, and innovation, deter threats, reform procurement to enhance the security of the Euro-Atlantic area, and expand the industrial base.

Australia created a new office of Minister for Defence Industry in 2016. Australia also created Office of Defence Industry Support in 2021 as a One-Stop organization, which supports small and medium sized enterprises participating in the defense industry and provides them with financial supports. In its Defence Industry Development Strategy (DIDS) announced in February 2024, Australia outlined seven Sovereign Defence Industrial Priorities (SDIPs) and, in order to realize these SDIPs, they set out programs to strengthen cooperation between the government and the defense industry, such as providing vocational training and subsidies to businesses as well as promoting public-private personnel exchanges. In addition, in October 2024, Australia announced the Australian Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Plan (GWEO), revealing the country's plan to initially acquire long-range missiles from foreign countries (specifically the United States and Norway) while building the domestic missile manufacturing facilities with the aim of launching domestic manufacturing operations in 2027. In terms of shipbuilding, Australia also announced Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Plan in December 2024, spelling out information that included an overview of the plans

9 According to the Chinese Government website
10 According to U.S. Government website information related to the National Quantum Initiative Act, etc.
11 According to a CSIS report
12 According to CNBC coverage, etc.
13 According to the preamble of the European Chips Act

to develop necessary facilities.

In March 2024, the EU announced its first European Defence Industry Strategy (EDIS), which sets numerical targets for defense-related trade within the EU and the proportion of joint procurement and presents a series of actions, including financial support and strengthening relationships with other countries, to enhance the competitiveness and readiness of the European defense industry.

In addition, in March 2025, the EU published the White Paper for European Defence – Readiness 2030, based on which the EU is striving to improve the combat readiness of its defense industry by pursuing initiatives that include focusing on the production of equipment for which there is a shortage, expanding joint procurement, and deepening the integration between the defense industries of the EU and Ukraine to support that country.

In April 2025, the EU also revised Common Position 2008/944/CFSP (a common policy on exporting weapons that was first established in 2008) for the first time in around six years. This policy clearly identifies the risks to be considered when member states decide whether to allow exports, such as possible violations of international laws related to humanitarian concerns or human rights as well as the possible diversion of exported goods or their subsequent export to third party countries, and the policy also requires member states to enhance their management of end users in particular.

The Republic of Korea (ROK) aims to improve capabilities and higher self-containment of domestic defense industry through their Defense Industry Development and Support Act and their Defense Science and Technology Innovation Promotion Act, which were enforced in 2021. Furthermore, the Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) announced a policy to procure equipment taking into consideration the ripple effects for domestic industries, and a policy to promote cooperation between foreign companies and domestic companies as well as the use of domestic products by foreign companies.[14]

Each country exports military equipment strategically because trading equipment strengthens the relationship between two trading countries as well as the defense production and technological bases. For example, the United Kingdom announced in its Defence and Security Industrial Strategy (DSIS) that it would support exporting with cross-ministerial effort from different government offices, such as the Department for International Trade and the Home Office.

The United States, Russia, Europe and China are still the top four in terms of export value of military equipment, while Australia formulated its export strategy.[15] The ROK established an export support organization,[16] and financially supports research and development for export. Various countries proactively promote military equipment export using a variety of measures.

See Fig. I-4-4 (Top Ranking Countries in Major Conventional Arms Export (2021-2025)); Part IV, Chapter 2, Section 1 (Reinforcing Defense Production Bases); Part IV, Chapter 2, Section 2 (Reinforcing Defense Technology Base)

Fig. I-4-4 Top Ranking Countries in Major Conventional Arms Export (2021-2025)

Rank	Country or region	Shares in the total global exports of defense equipment (%) 2021-2025	Comparison with 2016-2020 (%)
1	The United States	42	27
2	France	9.8	21
3	Russia	6.8	-64
4	Germany	5.7	15
5	China	5.6	11
6	Italy	5.1	157
7	Israel	4.4	56
8	The United Kingdom	3.4	13
9	ROK	3.0	24
10	Spain	2.3	6.7

(Note) Created based on "SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, Mar. 2026." Only the top 10 countries by export share for 2021 to 2025 are indicated.

14 The ROK announced the introduction of the Korea Defense Capability policy in 2021, which includes these policies.
15 Australia announced the Defence Export Strategy in 2018.
16 The Defense Export Promotion Center was established in 2018.

Part II

Japan's Security and Defense Policy

Chapter 1 Basic Concepts of Japan's Security and Defense

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

Chapter 3 Organizations Responsible for Japan's Security and Defense

Chapter 4 Framework for the JSDF Activities

Chapter 1

Basic Concepts of Japan's Security and Defense

Section 1 Measures to Ensure Security

The independence of the nation must be protected so that Japan can determine its own political, economic, and social systems and preserve its culture, traditions, and values. In addition, peace and security are indispensable for the people to live with a sense of safety and for Japan to continue to prosper. However, maintaining Japan's sovereignty and independence can only be achieved through Japan's own proactive and autonomous efforts.

The first priority in protecting the lives and livelihoods of the people of Japan should be the conduct of proactive diplomacy. It is essential to cooperate with like-minded countries and promote multilateral cooperation based on the Japan-U.S. Alliance[1] with the United States, which shares fundamental values and interests with Japan, while emphasizing universal values and principles such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

At the same time, defense capabilities are required to back up diplomacy. As its strategic approach, Japan will develop diplomacy under a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and promote the fundamental reinforcement of its defense capabilities, including the possession of counterstrike capabilities.

Meanwhile, it is no longer possible for a single country to ensure its security on its own. Therefore, cooperation and collaboration with allies, like-minded countries, and the like is essential.

From the perspective of creating the ideal security environment for Japan and preventing the emergence of threats, the importance of the role played by defense capabilities is increasing in cooperative efforts as a member of the Indo-Pacific region and the international community.

Upon recognizing the role of defense capabilities, Japan aims to ensure national security, as well as bring peace and security to the Indo-Pacific region, and eventually to the entire world, by exerting its utmost efforts in a variety of fields, including diplomacy and economics.

See Fig. III-3-1-1 (The MOD's Efforts Under the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) (Image)); Part III, Chapter 1, Section 2-1 [Commentary] (Stand-off Defense Capabilities)

Section 2 The Constitution and the Basis of Defense Policy

1 The Constitution and the Right of Self-Defense

After the end of World War II, Japan resolved not to repeat the horrors of war and has worked hard to build a peace-loving nation. The Japanese people desire peace for all time, and the principle of pacifism is enshrined in the Constitution, Article 9, which prescribes the renunciation of war, the prohibition of war potential, and the denial of the right of belligerency of the state. Since Japan is an independent nation, it goes without saying that these provisions do not deny Japan's inherent right of self-defense as a sovereign state. Thus, the Japanese Government interprets it as a constitutional right to possess the minimum armed forces needed to exercise that right.

Therefore, Japan, under the Constitution, maintains the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) as an armed organization, holding its exclusively defense-oriented policy as its basic strategy of defense, and continues to keep it equipped and ready for operations.

1 In general, this refers to the relationship, based on the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements, whereby both nations, as countries sharing fundamental values and interests, coordinate and cooperate closely in a range of areas in security, politics, and economics.

2 The Government's View on Article 9 of the Constitution

1 Permitted Self-Defense Capability

Under the Constitution, Japan is permitted to possess the minimum required self-defense capability. The specific limit is subject to change according to the prevailing international situation, the level of military technologies, and various other factors, and it is discussed and decided through annual budget and other deliberations by the Diet representing the people. Whether its capability constitutes a war potential that Japan is prohibited to possess by Article 9, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution must be considered within the context of Japan's overall military strength. Therefore, whether the JSDF should be allowed to possess certain armaments depends on whether such a possession would cause its total military strength to exceed the constitutional limit.

The possession of so-called "offensive weapons," which are designed to be used only for the mass destruction of another country, is not permissible under any circumstance as it would directly exceed the definition of the minimum necessary level for self-defense. For example, the JSDF is not allowed to possess intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), long-range strategic bombers, or attack aircraft carriers.

2 Measures for Self-Defense Permitted under Article 9 of the Constitution

It has been concluded in the Cabinet's decision made on July 1, 2014, "Development of Seamless Security Legislation to Ensure Japan's Survival and Protect its People," that the use of force should be interpreted to be permitted under the Constitution as measures for self-defense when the following three conditions (Three Conditions for the "use of force") are met:

(1) When an armed attack against Japan has occurred, or when an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs and as a result threatens Japan's survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn people's right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness;
(2) When there is no appropriate means available to repel the attack and ensure Japan's survival and protect its people;
(3) Use of force should be limited to the minimum extent necessary.

See Reference 6 (Development of Seamless Security Legislation to Ensure Japan's Survival and Protect its People)

3 Geographic Boundaries within Which the Right of Self-Defense May Be Exercised

The use of the minimum necessary force to defend Japan under the right of self-defense is not necessarily confined to the geographic boundaries of Japanese territory, territorial waters, and airspace. However, it is difficult to give a general definition of the actual extent to which it may be used, as this would vary with the situation.

Nevertheless, the Government interprets that, as a general rule, the Constitution does not permit armed troops to be dispatched to the land, sea, or airspace of other countries with the aim of using force; such overseas deployment of forces would exceed the definition of the minimum necessary level for self-defense.

4 Right of Belligerency

Article 9, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution prescribes that "the right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized." However, the "right of belligerency" does not mean the right to engage in battle; rather, it is a general term for various rights that a belligerent nation has under international law, including inflicting casualties and damage upon the enemy's military force and occupying enemy territory.

On the other hand, it is recognized as a matter of course that Japan can use the minimum necessary level of force to defend itself under its right of self-defense. For example, the act of Japan inflicting casualties and damage upon an enemy's military force under its right of self-defense constitutes a different concept from doing so under the exercise of the right of belligerency. Occupation of enemy territory, however, is not permissible because it would exceed the minimum necessary level for self-defense.

3 Basic Policy

Under the Constitution, Japan has efficiently built a highly effective and joint defense force 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, while firmly maintaining the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements, ensuring civilian control, and observing the Three Non-Nuclear Principles as a set of policy guidelines.

1 Exclusively Defense-Oriented Policy

The exclusively defense-oriented policy means that defensive force is used only in the event of an armed attack, that the extent of the use of defensive force is kept to the minimum necessary for self-defense, and that the defense capabilities to be possessed and maintained by Japan are limited to the minimum necessary for self-defense. The policy including these matters refers to the posture of a passive defense strategy in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution.

2 Not Becoming a Military Power

There is no established definition for the concept of a military power. For Japan, however, not becoming a military power that could threaten other countries means that Japan will not possess and maintain a military capability strong enough to pose a threat to other countries, beyond the minimum necessary for self-defense.

3 Three Non-Nuclear Principles

The Three Non-Nuclear Principles refers to those of not possessing nuclear weapons, not producing them, and not allowing them to be brought into Japan. Japan adheres to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles as a fixed line of national policy.

Japan is also prohibited from manufacturing and possessing nuclear weapons under the Atomic Energy Basic Law.[1] In addition, Japan ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and as a non-nuclear-weapon state, has an obligation not to manufacture and acquire nuclear weapons.[2]

4 Securing Civilian Control

Civilian control refers to the primacy of politics over the military in a democratic state or democratic political control over military power. Reflecting on the course of events leading up to the end of World War II, Japan has adopted the following strict system of civilian control. This system is entirely different from the one under the former Constitution.[3] It aims to ensure that the JSDF is developed and operated in accordance with the will of the people.

The Diet, which represents the people, makes legislative and budgetary decisions on matters such as the number of uniformed JSDF personnel and major organizations of the Ministry of Defense (MOD)/JSDF. It also issues approval for Defense Operations and other activities of the JSDF. The affairs of national defense entirely fall under the executive power of the Cabinet as general administrative matters. The Constitution requires that the Prime Minister and other Ministers of State who constitute the Cabinet to be civilians. The Prime Minister, on behalf of the whole Cabinet, has the highest authority to exercise control and supervision over the JSDF. The Defense Minister, who is exclusively in charge of national defense, superintends, commands, and manages the affairs of the JSDF. In addition, the National Security Council of Japan under the Cabinet deliberates important matters on national security.

At the MOD, the Defense Minister takes charge of and manages the administrative matters relevant to national defense, and as the competent minister also manages and administers the JSDF. The State Defense Ministers, the Parliamentary Vice-Ministers of Defense, and the Senior Adviser to the Defense Minister assist the Defense Minister in policies and planning and in state affairs.

In addition, the Special Adviser to the Defense Minister provides the Defense Minister with advice on important matters related to the affairs of the MOD based on their expertise and experience. The Defense Council consisting of political appointees, civilian officials, and uniformed JSDF personnel deliberates on basic principles related to the affairs of the MOD. These measures are implemented for further ensuring civilian control.

As mentioned above, the civilian control system is well established, but for the fruitful outcome of this system, it is necessary to continue making practical efforts in both political and administrative aspects, along with the people having deep interest in national defense.

See Chapter 3, Section 1 (National Security Council); Chapter 3, Section 2 (Organization of the MOD/JSDF)

1 Article 2 of the Atomic Energy Basic Law states that “utilization of atomic energy shall be limited to peaceful purposes, aimed at ensuring safety and performed independently under democratic management.”

2 Article 2 of the NPT states that “Each non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes...not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices...”

3 The supreme command authority was independent, and a broad range of matters related to military operations were recognized as the subject beyond control of the Cabinet and the Diet. In addition, except for a brief period, the ministers of the army and navy had to be active-duty military personnel. That made formulation of a cabinet that does not comply with the military’s intentions difficult. As a result, the military exerted undue influence over national politics.

Commentary

Meeting of the Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Force Command Personnel

On June 30, 2025, the MOD/JSDF welcomed then Prime Minister Ishiba to the MOD's Ichigaya area for the Meeting of the Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Force Command Personnel.

Bringing together about 160 JSDF command personnel and others from across the country, the meeting served as a valuable opportunity to thoroughly communicate the MOD's policy guidelines to all participants and receive direct instruction from the Prime Minister, who serves as the Commander-in-Chief of the JSDF. It was held for the first time in five years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other circumstances.

In his address, Prime Minister Ishiba referred to matters including approaches to civilian control, the launch of the JSDF Joint Operations Command and future efforts to strengthen Japan's defense capabilities, and strengthening of the human resource base, expressing his resolve to take the lead in Japan's national defense.



Scene from the Meeting of the Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Force Command Personnel

Section 3 Security Policy Framework

Japan has three main documents pertaining to its national security policy: the National Security Strategy of Japan (NSS),[1] the National Defense Strategy of Japan (NDS),[2] and the Defense Buildup Program (DBP).[3] After World War II, Japan's defense policy was based on the Basic Policy on National Defense. As a replacement for that policy, the NSS was formulated in 2013 as Japan's first such strategy. The NSS was developed as a strategy centered on foreign and defense policy, based on the recognition that Japan must identify its national interests from a long-term perspective, determine the course it should pursue within the international community, and work on measures for national security through a whole-of-government approach.

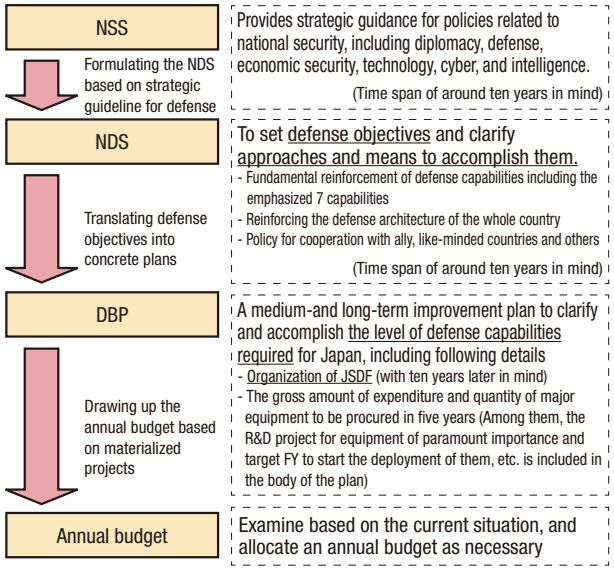
Subsequently, in 2022, in response to Japan facing the most severe and complex security environment since the start of the postwar period, a new NSS was formulated to provide strategic guidance for security policies in a wide range of areas, including not only the traditional areas of diplomacy and defense, but also the economy, technology, and intelligence.

Based on the new NSS, the NDS was formulated for the first time in the same year as a statement of the objectives of Japan's national defense as well as the approaches and means to achieve these objectives. The NDS replaces the National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG), which have served as Japan's basic guidelines for the buildup, sustainment, and operation of the defense capability of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) and have been formulated six times since 1976. The NSS and NDS are mainly designed for the next decade or so.

The first-ever DBP was formulated in 2022 in accordance with the NDS as a medium- to long-term plan that establishes the level of Japan's defense capabilities, the JSDF's structure which is based on the capability level roughly a decade into the future, and the total expenditures and the quantity of major equipment to be acquired over a five-year period. The future level of Japan's defense capabilities had been previously established in the NDPG, while the total expenditures for the buildup of defense capability over a five-year period were set forth in the Medium Term Defense Program (MTDP), which was in turn based on the NDPG. However, the level of Japan's defense capabilities as well as the total expenditures over a five-year period have now been integrated into a single, unified defense buildup program.

See Fig. II-1-3-1 (Relationship among the NSS, the NDS, the DBP, the Fiscal Year Budget); Chapter 2 (The Three Documents, including the National Security Strategy of Japan); Reference 2 (National Security Strategy of Japan); Reference 3 (National Defense Strategy); Reference 4 (Defense Buildup Program)

Fig. II-1-3-1 Relationship among the NSS, the NDS, the DBP, the Fiscal Year Budget



1 The National Security Strategy, approved by the National Security Council and the Cabinet on December 16, 2022
2 The National Defense Strategy of Japan, approved by the National Security Council and the Cabinet on December 16, 2022
3 The Defense Buildup Program, approved by the National Security Council and the Cabinet on December 16, 2022

Section 4 Revision of the Three Strategic Documents

Compared with 2022, when the current National Security Strategy (NSS), National Defense Strategy (NDS), and Defense Buildup Program (DBP) (hereinafter the "Three Strategic Documents") were formulated, changes in the security environment are accelerating across a wide range of fields.

First, challenges to the free and open international order based on the rule of law are intensifying. Russia's aggression against Ukraine, in particular, is an outrageous act that shakes the very foundation of the international order. Russia has continued its aggression against Ukraine for more than four years and has repeatedly engaged in words and actions that could be interpreted as threats involving nuclear weapons.

Second, the Indo-Pacific is seeing China and North Korea further strengthen their military capabilities, along with closer cooperation between China and Russia and between Russia and North Korea.

China has sustained high-level growth of its defense expenditure and engaged in broad, rapid improvement of its military power without sufficient transparency. Even since 2022, China's growth in defense expenditure has far outpaced that of Japan. China also continues its attempts to unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea and South China Sea, including intrusions into Japanese territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands. Furthermore, in addition to the activities of two aircraft carriers in the Pacific Ocean in June 2025, China commissioned its third aircraft carrier "Fujian" in November of the same year, thereby steadily developing operational capabilities in distant waters and airspace.

Additionally, although cooperation between China and Russia had already been observed before the formulation of the current Three Strategic Documents, in the three years since then, the two countries have steadily enhanced their strategic coordination. Military cooperation between Russia and North Korea has also deepened significantly.

Third, based on lessons learned from Russia's aggression against Ukraine, countries are hurrying to prepare to defend against new ways of warfare that include the mass operation of unmanned assets and possible prolonged wars.

Regarding new ways of warfare, developments observed in Russia's aggression against Ukraine include the mass deployment of diverse, inexpensive unmanned assets, as well as large-scale coordinated attacks that combine these assets with conventional shells and missiles. In addition, both sides are making full use of elements such as electronic warfare, AI, space, cyber, and information warfare, with the role of AI on the battlefield expanding particularly rapidly. Hybrid warfare combining these elements is becoming increasingly sophisticated.

At the same time, in terms of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, alongside preparing for new ways of warfare, it has also been important to incorporate conventional equipment, including tanks, artillery, and trench warfare, thereby combining modern combat approaches with traditional ones.

Moreover, equipment and tactics on the battlefield are being updated on an extremely short cycle compared to the past, and prompt, flexible technological innovations are becoming increasingly important.

The fact that Russia's aggression against Ukraine has continued for more than four years has also brought into sharp focus the importance of maintaining regular stockpiles and ensuring sustained response capabilities by further enhancing defense production and technological bases.

Against this backdrop of accelerating changes in the security environment across various fields, the Government of Japan has brought forward the goal to achieve the defense budget level of 2% of GDP outlined in the current NSS in FY2025 with a combination of initial and supplementary budget. It is also conducting internal deliberations toward revising the Three Strategic Documents in 2026.

In addition, in order to weather the severe security environment surrounding Japan, it is important to respond by combining various policy means while strengthening Japan's comprehensive national power, namely its diplomatic, defense, economic, technological, intelligence, and human resource capabilities. From this perspective, it has been deemed necessary not only to reinforce defense capabilities centered on the equipment and activities of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), but also to organize cross-governmental initiatives, including maritime safety capabilities, research and development, public infrastructure development, cybersecurity, and international cooperation aimed at enhancing the deterrence capabilities of Japan and like-minded countries, and to examine how Japan's security should be ensured from the standpoint of comprehensive national power, including the aforementioned initiatives. In doing so, it is also considered essential to strengthen technological capabilities and the industrial base through cross-governmental initiatives, while advancing economic security policies and fostering economic fundamentals so that Japan's credibility and the lives of its citizens will not be harmed even in times of contingency. From this perspective, it has also been deemed necessary to examine both the reinforcement of deterrence and response capabilities and the appropriate approach to economic and fiscal policy. Based on this recognition, in April 2026, the Expert Panel to Consider National Security from the Perspective of Comprehensive National Power was established within the Cabinet Secretariat, and its inaugural meeting was held by the Prime Minister.

As for the Ministry of Defense (MOD), 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 Strategic Documents, as well as considering new versions of the Three Strategic Documents. Discussions toward their revision are currently underway.



The Promotion HQ for Transformation of Defense Capabilities

Chapter 2

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

Section 1 Outline of the National Security Strategy (NSS)

The National Security Strategy (NSS) is Japan's supreme national security policy document. We live in the world of a historical inflection point and in the face of the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II (WWII). To protect our national interests in such an environment, Japan needs to carry out vigorous diplomacy. Japan must also possess defense capabilities that bolster the solid footing of such diplomacy. To achieve these objectives, the current NSS was formulated in 2022 from the perspective that Japan needs a strategy that integrates its national responses at a higher level. This strategy takes a panoramic view of the diverse dimensions of international relations as a whole, where confrontation and cooperation are intricately intertwined, and takes full advantage of comprehensive national power, including diplomatic, defense, economic, technological, and intelligence capabilities.

The strategic guidance and policies under the NSS will dramatically transform Japan's national security policy after the end of WWII from the aspect of its execution. The NSS lays out Japan's national interests, basic principles concerning the national security, and the country's security challenges. On this basis, it sets out national security objectives and identifies strategic approaches to achieving them.

See Reference 2 (National Security Strategy of Japan)

Section 2 Outline of the National Defense Strategy (NDS)

The National Defense Strategy (NDS) was newly formulated in December 2022 and replaces the National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG), which have served as Japan's basic guidelines for the buildup, sustainment, and operation of the defense capability of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) and have been formulated six times since 1976.

The NDS comprehensively presents Japan's defense objectives and approaches and the means by which Japan accomplishes those objectives. The outline is as follows.

The most important responsibility of the Government of Japan is to resolutely defend to the end the lives of Japanese nationals and their peaceful livelihoods, as well as Japan's territorial land, airspace, and waters. This constitutes the foundation of Japan's national security. The international community, of which Japan is a member, is facing serious challenges, and has entered into a new era of crisis. One cannot rule out the possibility of serious events taking place in the future in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly in East Asia, that might shake the foundation of the stable postwar international order. Amid the most challenging and complex security environment since the start of the postwar period, Japan needs to directly face up to the grim reality and fundamentally reinforce its defense capabilities, with a focus on the capabilities of its opponents, to protect the lives and peaceful livelihoods of Japanese nationals.

The military background for Russia's aggression against Ukraine was that Ukraine did not possess sufficient capabilities to deter Russian aggression. There has also been a renewed recognition that no nation can possibly safeguard its security on its own and that cooperation with allies who possess the will and capability to jointly counter invasions is integral. Another point worth noting in this case is that a nation with powerful military capabilities had developed the intention to launch aggression at some point in time. While threats materialize through a combination of capability and intention, it is difficult to accurately ascertain another party's intention from the outside. If a state's decision-making process is opaque, there will always exist conditions under which threats may materialize. To protect one's nation from such states, it is necessary to possess deterrence capabilities that alert others to the difficulty of making unilateral changes to the status quo by force, as well as to develop defense capabilities that are focused on the capabilities of opponents.

See Reference 1 (Changes in the Roles of Defense Capabilities)

1 Japan's Basic Defense Policy

Defense capabilities are the foundation of the defense of Japan and the ultimate guarantor of Japan's national security. They serve to deter threats to Japan and should a threat to Japan arise, to block and eliminate the threat, thereby demonstrating Japan's will and ability to defend itself to the

end. With regard to future defense capabilities, Japan must fundamentally reinforce its capabilities to defend itself more than ever before by focusing on opponents' capabilities and ways of warfare, and clearly demonstrate its resolve that it will never tolerate unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force and such attempts in any situation.

Japan has the following three defense objectives.

(i) To shape a security environment that does not tolerate unilateral changes to the status quo by force
(ii) To deter, through cooperation and collaboration with our ally, like-minded countries and others, unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts and to bring the situation under control at an early stage
(iii) To take primary responsibility to deal with invasion of Japan, if any, and to disrupt and defeat it, while receiving support from the ally and others

In dealing with the threat of nuclear weapons, U.S. extended deterrence, with nuclear deterrence at its core, is essential. Japan will defend itself to the end in all situations through the combination of its own efforts to achieve the three defense objectives and extended deterrence and the like provided by the United States.

The three approaches to achieving these defense objectives, as well as the basic ideas behind them, are as follows.

(i) To fundamentally reinforce Japan's defense capabilities, which constitute the core of national defense, and reinforce the defense architecture of the whole country in an effort to strengthen Japan's own architecture for national defense
(ii) To further reinforce joint deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance by further strengthening cooperation with the United States, our ally
(iii) To reinforce collaboration with like-minded countries and others with whom Japan cooperate to uphold and reinforce a free and open international order

(1) First Approach: Strengthening Japan's Own Architecture for National Defense

a. Fundamental Reinforcement of Japan's Defense Capabilities

With a fundamentally reinforced defense capability, Japan should be able to take primary responsibility to disrupt and defeat invasion against Japan. This means that Japan will possess a capability that makes the opponent realize that the goal of invasion of Japan is not achievable by military means, and that the damage the opponent will incur makes the invasion not worth the cost. If Japan possesses such defense capability, this capability, coupled with that of the United States, will be able to deter not only an invasion against Japan, but also deter unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts in the Indo-Pacific region. This will help foster a security environment where such forcible actions are not tolerated. This is why Japan will fundamentally reinforce its defense capabilities.

As for the functions and capabilities required amid such a backdrop, Japan will first reinforce its (i) stand-off defense capabilities and (ii) integrated air and missile defense capabilities, in order to disrupt and defeat invading forces from a long distance, thereby deterring invasion against Japan itself. Should deterrence fail and invasion of Japan occur, Japan will leverage, in addition to capabilities (i) and (ii), manned and unmanned assets, acquire superiority in cross-domain operations, and preserve its asymmetric edge. To this end, Japan will reinforce its (iii) unmanned defense capabilities, (iv) cross-domain operation capabilities, and (v) command-and-control and intelligence-related functions. Furthermore, to continue operating swiftly and tenaciously to dissuade the opponent from invasion, Japan will also reinforce its (vi) mobile deployment capabilities and civil protection efforts, as well as its (vii) sustainability and resiliency.

Japan will need to promptly realize the fundamental reinforcement of its defense capabilities as when and how unilateral changes to the status quo occur is hard to predict. First, by FY2027, five years after the formulation of the NDS, Japan will strengthen its defense capability to the point where Japan is able to take primary responsibility for dealing with invasions against this nation, and disrupt and defeat such threats with the support of its ally and others. The top priorities for this period are twofold: first, to maximize effective use of its existing equipment, Japan will increase the number of operationally available equipment, secure sufficient ammunition and fuel, and accelerate investment in improving the resiliency of key defense facilities; and second, Japan will strengthen its core capabilities for future operations. 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 earlier and at places further afield.

A key to deterring invasion against Japan is counterstrike capabilities that leverage stand-off defense capabilities and other capabilities. In recent years, in Japan's surroundings, there have been significant improvement of missile forces in both quality and quantity, and missiles themselves have been repeatedly launched. Missile attacks have become a palpable threat. Amidst this, Japan will continue its efforts to constantly reinforce existing missile defense capabilities in both quality and quantity. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to fully address missile threats with the existing missile defense network alone. For this reason, Japan needs counterstrike capabilities: capabilities which enable Japan to mount effective counterstrikes against the opponent to prevent further armed attacks while defending against incoming missiles by means of its missile defense network.

Counterstrike capabilities are the JSDF's capabilities that leverage stand-off defense capabilities and other capabilities. In cases where armed attack against Japan has occurred, and as part of that attack ballistic missiles and other means have been used, counterstrike capabilities enable Japan to mount effective counterstrikes against the opponent's territory in accordance with the Three Conditions for the "use

of force" as a minimum necessary self-defense measure that cannot be avoided to prevent such an attack. Having such counterstrike capabilities will deter armed attack itself. If an opponent ever launches missiles, it will be able to prevent the opponent's further armed attacks by counterstrike capabilities, while protecting itself against incoming missiles by the missile defense network, thereby defending the lives and peaceful livelihoods of Japanese nationals.

As counterstrike capabilities fall within the purview of Japan's Constitution and international law, they do not change Japan's exclusively defense-oriented policy, and they can be exercised only when the Three Conditions for the "use of force" are fulfilled. Needless to say, preemptive strikes, namely striking first at a stage when no armed attack has occurred, remain impermissible. While the basic division of roles between Japan and the United States will remain unchanged, as Japan will now possess counterstrike capabilities, the two nations will cooperate in counterstrikes.

b. Reinforcing the Defense Architecture of the Whole Country

The JSDF must be strong in order to protect Japan, but national defense cannot be achieved without a whole-of-country approach. For this reason, besides the fundamental reinforcement of its defense capabilities, Japan will develop a defense architecture for the whole country by integrating its national power, which includes its diplomatic, intelligence, economic, and technological capabilities, and systematically combining various policy means. To strengthen such whole-of-government efforts, it is essential to break down sectionalism within the Government. To this end, Japan will reinforce the comprehensive defense architecture that mobilizes its national power, an undertaking that is integral to supplementing the fundamental reinforcement of defense capabilities. The national government will also promote cooperation with local governments and private entities.

(2) Second Approach: Joint Deterrence and Response by the Japan-U.S. Alliance

The second approach is to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance. The Alliance with the United States is a key pillar of Japan's security, and fundamental reinforcement of Japan's defense capabilities will lead to more effective employment of U.S. capabilities and will further strengthen deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. By demonstrating such joint resolve and capability, Japan and the United States will deter unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts. In addition, if an invasion of Japan occurs, a Japan-U.S. joint response will disrupt the invasion.

The first measure to this end is to strengthen Japan-U.S. joint deterrence and response capabilities. Japan's NDS and the United States' National Defense Strategy are well aligned in prioritizing the prevention of unilateral changes to the status quo by force through integrating all approaches and means. Accordingly, Japan will further deepen discussions with the United States on their respective roles, missions, and capabilities, and further reinforce Japan-U.S. joint deterrence capabilities in an integrated manner from the perspectives of enhancing readiness and resiliency, imposing a cost on opponents, and deterring invasion against Japan.

The next is to reinforce alliance coordination functions. To conduct aligned joint responses of Japan and the United States, Japan will further upgrade the overall coordination functions centered on the Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM). In addition, in order to enhance collaboration with like-minded countries and others centered around the Japan-U.S. Alliance, Japan will promote closer operational coordination by leveraging the ACM and others.

Furthermore, Japan will reinforce the foundational elements that support effective allied response in all phases, including information security, cybersecurity, and equipment and technology cooperation.

The last is measures to support the stationing of the U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ). Japan will promote various measures to provide stable support for the stationing of the USFJ, such as steady implementation of the realignment of the USFJ and the initiatives to reinforce the readiness and resiliency of the USFJ, while optimizing the bilateral joint posture to respond to the severe security environment.

(3) Third Approach: Collaboration with Like-minded Countries and Others

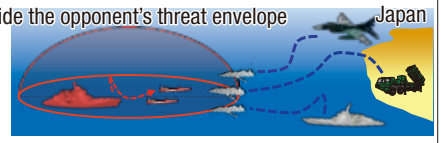
In order to respond to unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts and to ensure Japan's security, it is extremely important to reinforce collaboration with not only our ally but also as many countries as possible. From such a perspective, Japan will promote efforts that contribute to realizing a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). Moreover, Japan will proactively promote multilateral and multilayered defense cooperation and exchanges, taking into account regional characteristics and situations of various countries. While promoting collaboration with like-minded countries and others, Japan will pay attention to communication with China and Russia.

2 Key Capabilities for Fundamental Reinforcement of Defense Capabilities (Seven Priority Areas)

The NDS lays out the basic concepts and contents of the seven functions and capabilities necessary for the defense of Japan, which are derived from the basic policies and the comprehensive operation concept in line with them. The seven functions and capabilities are (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 and civil protection efforts, and (vii) sustainability and resiliency.

See Fig. II-2-2-1 (Seven Functions and Capabilities on Which to Focus in Fundamentally Reinforcing Defense Capabilities and Their Images)

Fig. II-2-2-1 Seven Functions and Capabilities on Which to Focus in Fundamentally Reinforcing Defense Capabilities and Their Images

(1) Stand-off Defense Capabilities	•Strengthening the defense capabilities to oppose invading forces from a safe distance where we will not be attacked	
(2) Integrated Air and Missile Defense Capabilities	•Strengthening our capabilities to respond to increasingly diverse and complex airborne threats such as missiles	 Shipbuilding of Aegis System-Equipped Vessel (Note)
(3) Unmanned Defense Capabilities	•Strengthening our capabilities, e.g., via intelligence gathering and combat support with unmanned assets	 Preparation of UAV for reconnaissance (for mid-range) (Note)
(4) Cross-Domain Operation Capabilities	•Strengthening space, cyber, electromagnetic spectrum, land, sea and air capabilities necessary for combat by fusing all capabilities	 Development of Stand-off Electronic Warfare Aircraft
(5) Command and Control and Intelligence-related Functions	•Strengthening command and control and intelligence-related functions to accelerate and refine decision-making	 Acquisition of Signals Intelligence Aircraft (RC-2)
(6) Mobile Deployment Capabilities/ Civil Protection Efforts	•Strengthening maritime and air transport capabilities to quickly maneuver and deploy the necessary forces •Implementing civil protection by utilizing the above capabilities	 Acquisition of transport vessels
(7) Sustainability and Resiliency	•Preparation of necessary and sufficient ammunition, guided missiles and fuel from an early stage •Securing expenditures for acquiring equipment parts, equipment repairing and improving the resiliency of facilities	 Securing the ammunition storage facilities (Note)

The (note) in the figure is an image.

Perspective

The Significance of Extended Deterrence

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Deterrence is the act of ensuring that your opponent is prevented from taking a specific action. A key objective of Japan's defense policy is to deter another party from unilaterally changing, or attempting to change, the status quo in the Indo-Pacific region through the use of force or coercion. Deterrence is important because when strengthened, it can prevent situations that would threaten or compromise Japan's national security, including military invasions such as Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

There are two different approaches to deterrence: deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment. Deterrence by denial involves preventing specific actions by an aggressor by making it impossible for them to successfully carry out those actions. For example, the act of possessing sufficient missile defense capabilities can convince an aggressor that it would not be able to achieve its objectives even with a missile attack, thereby deterring them from such actions.

Meanwhile, deterrence by punishment refers to being ready to respond to specific actions of an aggressor by inflicting damage or costs on a much greater scale than the benefits the aggressor could ever gain from those actions, thereby preventing them from engaging in actions the deterring party wishes to avoid. An example of this is a deterring party threatening to inflict "grievous damage" on an aggressor in the event of a military invasion, thereby forcing the latter to abandon its attempt. The word "punishment" is often associated with military measures such as retaliatory strikes, but it also encompasses a variety of other measures, including diplomatic pressure and economic sanctions. With deterrence by punishment, it is also important for the deterring party to make it clear that it will refrain from any such acts of punishment as long as the aggressor does not cause problems.

There are several factors thought to be linked to whether or not deterrence is successful. The first key factor is whether the deterring party can build the broad range of capabilities necessary for deterring an aggressor. If a country's capabilities are considered insufficient on their own, another effective measure is to reinforce deterrence through extended deterrence provided by allies with greater capabilities.

Another important factor is how determined the deterring party is to use its means of deterrence whenever confronted with such a situation. On this point, it is also important to consider how much of an interest the deterring party has in the issue compared to the aggressor. This is because any threat to the aggressor becomes more credible when these interests are considered critical by the deterring party.

Finally, the most important factor of all is whether the aggressor recognizes the deterrent. No matter the amount of capabilities, determination, or interests on the side of the deterring party, an invasion cannot be prevented unless the aggressor recognizes these as a threat. Consequently, a successful deterrence hinges on a deterring party effectively convincing an aggressor of its capabilities. To achieve this, it is essential that the deterring party regularly strive to gain a thorough understanding of the circumstances and mindset of an aggressor nation, in addition to always looking at a situation from the aggressor's perspective.

(Note) This column is an independent analysis from the researcher's academic perspective, and its contents do not represent an official government position.

3 Future of the JSDF

The NDS lays out basic concepts with regard to a number of aspects, including the roles of each service of the JSDF in the seven priority areas of key capabilities for fundamental reinforcement of defense capabilities, the joint operations system based on these roles, and the development of the architecture of each service of the JSDF. Given the need for strategic and agile defense policy planning and making, the NDS states that the JSDF will fundamentally reinforce its functions concerned.

See Fig. II-2-2-2 (Concept for Developing the JSDF's Architecture)

Fig. II-2-2-2 Concept for Developing the JSDF's Architecture

Strengthening the joint operations system	・Reorganizing the existing structure and establishing a permanent Joint Headquarters ・Considering defense equipment systems that contribute to joint operations
Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF)	・Developing a system that places importance on stand-off defense capabilities, rapid maneuver and disperse deployment capabilities, and command and control and intelligence-related functions ・Contributing to cross-domain operations mainly in the cyber domain
Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF)	・Reinforcing air defense capabilities, information warfare capabilities, stand-off defense capabilities, etc. ・Promoting labor-saving and automation measures ・Developing a system that will allow acquiring and sustaining superiority in underwater
Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF)	・Reinforcing mobile and dispersed operations and stand-off defense and other capabilities ・Renewing the ASDF as the Aerospace Self-Defense Force, thereby developing a system to ensure superiority in use of space
Defense Intelligence Headquarters	・Assuming the central role of responding to Integrated Information Warfare ・Fundamentally reinforcing capabilities to grasp military activities of other countries and analyzing and disseminating them

(Note) The JSDF as a whole will reinforce its capabilities to contribute to the reinforcement of cybersecurity of the entire country.

4 Measures for Protection of Life, Person, and Property of Japanese Nationals

The NDS lays out basic concepts of measures for protection of the life, person, and property of Japanese nationals; measures for international security cooperation; and the reinforcement both of the defense production and technological bases as a virtually integral part of defense capability itself and of the human resource base for JSDF personnel, the core element of defense capability, to demonstrate their abilities.

See Fig. II-2-2-3 (Measures, etc. for Protection of the Life, Person, and Property of Japanese Nationals); Part III, Chapter 1, Section 3-7 (Response to Large-Scale Disasters, Etc.); Part III, Chapter 1, Section 3-8 (Responses to Rescue and Transportation of Japanese Nationals Overseas (R/TJNO)); Part IV (Reinforcing Defense Production and Technological Bases); Part V (Reinforcing the Human Resource Base)

Fig. II-2-2-3 Measures, etc. for Protection of the Life, Person, and Property of Japanese Nationals

Protection of Life, Person and Property of Japanese Nationals and Measures for International Security Cooperation
Measures for protection of life, person and property of Japanese nationals ・Not only an invasion of Japan, but also large-scale terrorist attacks, attacks on critical infrastructure including nuclear power plants, large-scale disasters, and infectious disease crises are serious threats, and Japan will respond to them with its utmost efforts.
Measures for security cooperation against global challenges ・For the peace and security of Japan, and from the perspective of proactive contribution to peace, Japan will make efforts toward resolving conflicts and confrontations around the world, provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the event of large-scale international disasters caused by climate change, and proactively respond to global challenges such as non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
Defense Production and Technological Bases as a Virtually Integral Part of Defense Capabilities
・Defense production and technological bases constitute an indispensable foundation for securing the stable research, development, production, and procurement of equipment in Japan and for incorporating cutting-edge technologies necessary for Japanese new ways of defense based on new ways of warfare into defense equipment. These bases are virtually defense capabilities themselves, and their reinforcement is essential. ・Japan will promote initiatives such as building a strong and sustainable defense industry necessary for Japanese new ways of defense based on new ways of warfare, dealing with various risks, and expanding sales channels.
Strengthening the Foundation for Uniformed JSDF Personnel, the Core of Japan's Defense Capabilities, to Demonstrate Their Abilities
Reinforcing the human resource base ・The MOD/JSDF will secure necessary uniformed JSDF personnel, the core of Japan's defense capabilities, and create an environment that enables them all to demonstrate their own abilities to their fullest while maintaining high morale and pride.
Transforming the medical function ・The MOD/JSDF will transform the JSDF medical force—which has been placing importance on sustaining the health of uniformed JSDF personnel—into an organization that saves the lives of uniformed JSDF personnel who carry out their missions in a contingency in spite of danger.

Section 3 Outline of the Defense Buildup Program (DBP)

The Defense Buildup Program (DBP) sets out, among other things, the level of defense capability Japan should possess to fundamentally reinforce Japan's defense capabilities under the National Defense Strategy (NDS), as well as the total expenditures and the quantity of major equipment needed to achieve that level. The summary of the DBP is as follows.

See Reference 4 (Defense Buildup Program)

1 Program Guidelines

In accordance with the NDS, by FY2027, five years after the formulation of the DBP, Japan will strengthen its defense capabilities to a point where it will be able to take primary responsibility for countering any invasion of its nation and disrupt and defeat such threats while gaining 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 earlier and at places further afield.

The Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) will efficiently and effectively build, maintain, and operate the defense capabilities based on a plan with the following as essential parts.

As for the functions and capabilities required for its national defense, Japan will first reinforce its (i) stand-off defense capabilities and (ii) integrated air and missile defense capabilities, in order to disrupt and defeat invading forces from a long distance, thereby deterring invasion against Japan itself. Should deterrence fail and invasion of Japan occur, Japan would need to ensure asymmetric advantage by leveraging, in addition to these capabilities, manned as well as unmanned assets and gain superiority across domains such as underwater, surface, and air, and to this end, Japan will reinforce (iii) unmanned defense capabilities, (iv) cross-domain operation capabilities, and (v) command-and-control and intelligence-related functions. Furthermore, to operate in a prompt as well as persistent manner so as to force the opponent to give up invasion, Japan will reinforce (vi) mobile deployment capabilities and civil protection efforts and (vii) sustainability and resiliency. Additionally, Japan will focus on its defense production and technological bases as a virtually integral part of defense capability itself, as well as areas such as the human resource base that supports its defense capabilities.

Next, in equipment acquisition, Japan will ensure the necessary quantity and quality for its defense capabilities by appropriately combining the introduction of new, high-performance equipment with the life extension and improvement of existing equipment. In doing so, it will strive to reduce costs and improve cost-effectiveness by enhancing project management throughout the life cycle of equipment. In addition, Japan will steadily work toward the early deployment of defense equipment for programs that are particularly urgent and significant from a policy perspective in areas that could directly affect the JSDF's current and future ways of warfare, including by leveraging cutting-edge civilian technologies.

At the same time, Japan will comprehensively promote various measures to reinforce its human resource base, such as strengthening recruitment efforts, leveraging JSDF Reserve Personnel and others, promoting the active participation of women, effectively utilizing diverse and high-quality talents, improving living and work environments, developing human resources, and improving treatment.

Moreover, to further reinforce the joint deterrence capabilities of Japan and the United States in an integrated manner, Japan will promote cooperation and improved interoperability, etc. related to cross-domain operations. In order to reinforce the infrastructure to support effective joint response capabilities, Japan will also reinforce efforts related to information security and cybersecurity, as well as equipment and technology cooperation. In addition, measures to support the stationing of the U.S. Forces Japan will be steadily implemented. Furthermore, in order to actively promote multi-faceted and multi-layered defense cooperation and exchanges in line with a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), Japan will further promote the development of institutional frameworks for various agreements, while also promoting initiatives including bilateral training and exercises as well as defense equipment and technology cooperation.

Lastly, in fundamentally reinforcing defense capabilities, Japan will, while adhering to the scrap-and-build approach, optimize the JSDF's organization and authorized strength as well as equipment. We will also further our ongoing efforts toward more efficient procurement, which have achieved significant cost reductions. In addition, to account for Japan's aging population with a declining birth rate, Japan will robustly promote automation, labor-saving and optimization.

2 Organizations of Japan Self-Defense Forces

Based on the DBP's guidelines, each JSDF service is structured mainly as follows.

1 Joint Operation System

A permanent Joint Headquarters will be expeditiously established to build a system that is capable of seamless cross-domain operations at all phases from peacetime to contingencies, with the aim of strengthening the effectiveness of joint operations for each JSDF service.[1] In addition, current approaches to the organization of each JSDF service, including joint units, will be reviewed.

For further improvement of capabilities in the cyber domain, including constant and continuous monitoring of the MOD/JSDF's network and systems as well as the capability to disrupt an opponent's use of cyberspace for an attack against Japan, the JSDF will possess a cyber defense unit as a joint unit, in order to fundamentally reinforce cyber defense capability.

In addition, a new maritime transport unit will be established as a joint unit to improve the mobile deployment capabilities to the southwestern region.[2]

2 Japan Ground Self-Defense Force

The 15th Brigade, which oversees Okinawa, will be reorganized into a division to reinforce the defense architecture in the southwestern region of Japan.[3] Additionally, in order to strengthen stand-off defense capabilities, surface-to-ship missile units equipped with Upgraded Type-12 surface-to-ship missiles[4] will be retained. Furthermore, units equipped with hyper velocity gliding projectiles for the defense of remote islands[5] and a long-range guided missile unit equipped with upgraded hyper velocity gliding projectiles for the defense of remote islands and hypersonic missiles will be newly established. In order to secure the increased personnel necessary to strengthen stand-off defense capabilities, cyber capabilities, etc., the MOD/JSDF will abolish units mainly composed of the JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel, and allocate the regular uniformed JSDF personnel belonging to the units to fulfill the personnel requirements. In addition, the MOD/JSDF will manage JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel as replacements.

3 Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force

The Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) will maintain its surface ship units which have been reinforced through the introduction of patrol vessels and the like, in order to respond to the ever-increasing volume of operations, including maintaining a persistent and multi-layered information gathering and monitoring and surveillance posture, ensuring the security of maritime traffic, and conducting overseas deployment for security cooperation with other countries. In addition, the MSDF will procure Aegis System Equipped Vessels that will primarily conduct ballistic missile defense (BMD) operations.

Furthermore, for comprehensive information warfare, the MSDF Information Warfare Major Unit will be newly established by reorganizing and consolidating units with functions and capabilities in areas such as intelligence, cyber, communications, and meteorology/oceanography.[6]

Under the joint operations system, the MSDF will also implement revisions to core units and necessary reorganizations to build a structure capable of sustaining operations of units that require high speed and activity volume.[7]

4 Japan Air Self-Defense Force

The Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) will maintain fighter units that are greatly refined and reinforced in both qualitative and quantitative terms in order to have a comprehensive posture with air defense that brings together fighters and their relevant support functions. The ASDF will also build a structure to carry out mobile and dispersed operations in order to continue to battle tenaciously.

In addition, to reinforce space operation capabilities, the ASDF will make steady progress in developing a Space Domain Awareness (SDA) posture. The Space Domain Mission Units led by a general-level commander will be newly established, and the ASDF will be reorganized into the Aerospace Self-Defense Force.[8]

1 The permanent JSDF Joint Operations Command (JJOC) was established in March 2025 and the necessary system put in place with the JJOC at its core.
2 The Self-Defense Forces Maritime Transport Group was established in March 2025.
3 The 15th Brigade is scheduled to be reorganized during FY2026.
4 Deployment commenced in March 2026 with the missile designated the Type-25 Surface-to-Ship Guided Missile.
5 Deployment commenced in March 2026 with the missile designated the Type-25 Hyper velocity Gliding Projectile.
6 The Information Warfare Command was established in March 2026.
7 The Fleet Surface Force was established in March 2026.
8 Establishment and reorganization are scheduled to take place during FY2026.

5 Optimizing Organizational Capacity

The target number of uniformed JSDF personnel for the end of FY2027 is the level at the end of FY2022. The number of uniformed personnel in the GSDF, the MSDF, and the ASDF, respectively, will be reviewed as necessary to optimize organizational capacity. In addition, the capacity necessary to strengthen the joint operation structure will be adjusted between the JSDF services, and the GSDF personnel will be transferred to the MSDF and the ASDF to meet their increased personnel requirements. To this end, approximately 2,000 GSDF uniformed personnel will be transferred to joint units, the MSDF, and the ASDF, respectively.

3 Quantities of Major Procurement

The targets for fundamentally reinforced defense capabilities to be achieved in FY2027 and in approximately 10 years after the DBP's formulation are as shown in the DBP's Appendix Table 1. The details of the quantities of major defense equipment procured are as shown in Appendix Table 2. In addition, the DBP defines each JSDF service's formulation and equipment quantities in approximately 10 years after the DBP's formulation as shown in Appendix Table 3.

See Reference 4 (Defense Buildup Program)

4 Expenditures

The expenditure target for the buildup of defense capability required under the implementation of the DBP for the five years from FY2023 through FY2027 amount to approximately 43 trillion yen. The annual defense budgets for FY2023 to FY2027 under the DBP amount to approximately 40.5 trillion yen in total (approximately 8.9 trillion yen in FY2027), on the assumption that a number of additional measures will be taken. These measures include further accelerating the improvement of JSDF facilities in an agile and flexible manner in view of the progress of each project, utilizing the settlement surplus in the general account when the surplus is larger than the expected settlement surplus, and thoroughly implementing further optimization and rationalization of buildup of defense capabilities.

The expenses based on contracts (material expenses) to be newly concluded to implement the DBP amount to approximately 43.5 trillion yen (excluding the amount corresponding to payments for the period outside of the Program that contribute to improving project efficiency, such as maintenance).

Finally, to secure financial resources for the stable sustainment of defense capabilities after FY2027 as well as for covering the DBP from FY2023 to FY2027, necessary measures will be implemented in both expenditure and revenue areas, such as the reform in government expenditure, using the settlement surplus, creation of Defense Buildup Funds utilizing non-tax revenues, and tax measures.

See Section 4-4 (Secure Financial Resources for Reinforcing Defense Capabilities)

Section 4 Defense-Related Expenditures

1 Overview of Defense-Related Expenditures for FY2026

The MOD/JSDF is systematically proceeding in the fundamental reinforcement of Japan's defense capabilities, focusing on seven priority areas such as stand-off defense capabilities and unmanned defense capabilities. A necessary and sufficient budget has also been secured for defense-related expenditures for FY2026.

On an annual expenditure basis,[1] the Government of Japan steadily increased the budget, in line with the progress of programs and execution of budget, with a total of 8,809.3 billion yen allocated for the Defense Buildup Program (DBP)-related expenditures (a 3.9% year-on-year increase of 334.5 billion yen).

On a contract basis,[2] the Government of Japan compiled the projects necessary to start by FY2026, with a total of 8,260.7 billion yen allocated for DBP-related expenditures (a 2.0% year-on-year decrease of 172.5 billion yen). Amid higher prices and a weaker yen, the MOD/JSDF will thoroughly implement further optimization and rationalization of defense buildup. It will also thoroughly scrutinize expenses and further promote efficient equipment acquisition through such bulk purchases, long-term contracts among other means.

See Fig. II-2-4-1 (Comparison between Defense-Related Expenditures (Original Budget) of FY2025 and FY2026)); Fig. II-2-4-2 (Trends in Defense-Related Expenditures (Original Budget)); 2 (Breakdown of Defense-Related Expenditures); Reference 10 (Pattern of Defense-Related Expenditures (Original Budget Basis))

Fig. II-2-4-1 Comparison between Defense-Related Expenditures (Original Budget) of FY2025 and FY2026

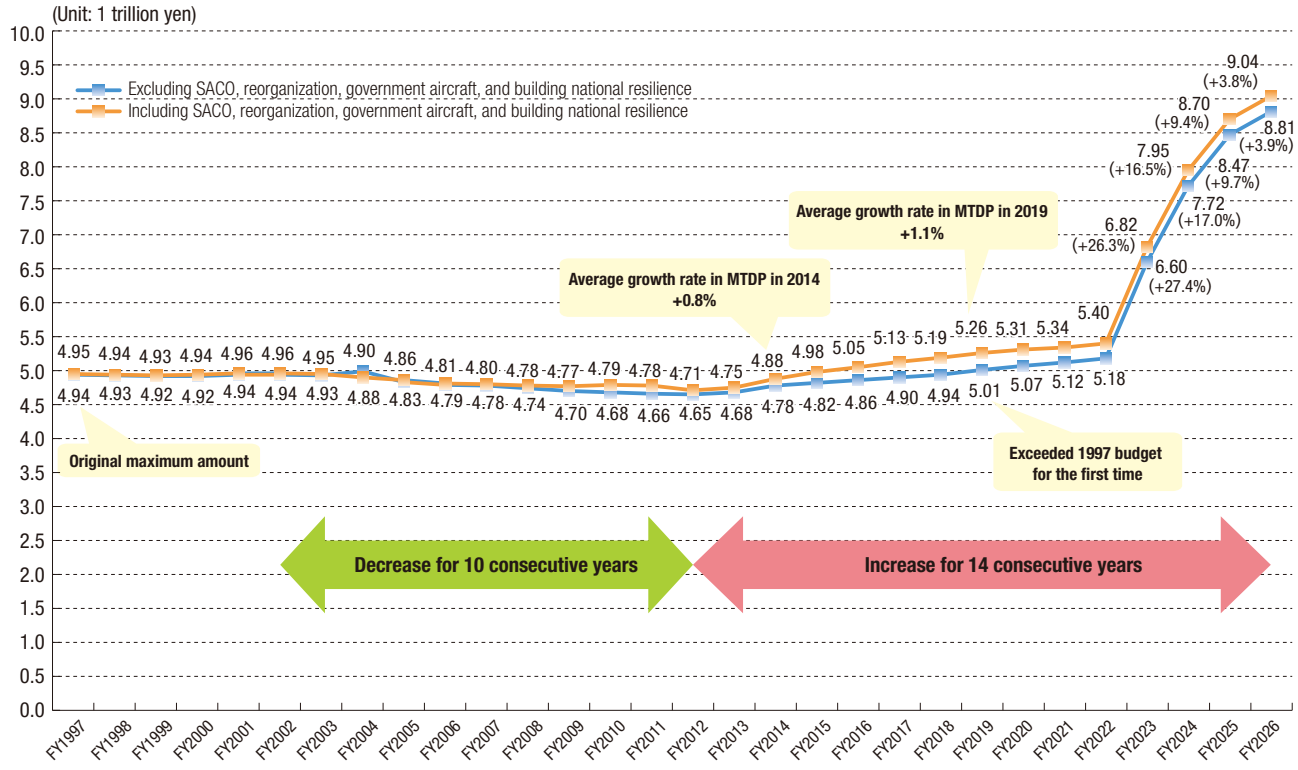
(Unit: 1 billion yen)

Category		FY2025	FY2026		
				Fiscal YOY change	
Annual expenditure		8,474.8	8,809.3	334.5	3.9%
	Personnel and food provisions	2,350.8	2,389.7	38.9	1.7%
	Material expenses	6,124.0	6,419.6	295.6	4.8%
Future obligation		15,388.6	16,827.4	1,438.8	9.3%
	New contracts	6,621.1	6,380.8	-240.3	-3.6%
	Existing contracts	8,767.5	10,446.6	1,679.1	19.2%

(Notes) 1 The figures above do not include SACO-related expenses and the U.S. Forces realignment-related expenses (the portion allocated for mitigating the impact on local communities), etc. If these are included, the total amounts of defense-related expenditures are 8,700.5 billion yen for FY2025 and 9,035.3 billion yen for FY2026; and for future obligation, 16,035 billion yen for FY2025 and 17,806.5 billion yen for FY2026.
2 The budget amounts include expenditures pertaining to the Digital Agency.
3 Figures may not add up to the total due to rounding.

1 The total amount paid during the fiscal year concerned for programs for equipment acquisition, facility improvement, and the like.
2 The total amount of contracts concluded during the fiscal year concerned for programs for equipment acquisition, facility improvement, and the like.

Fig. II-2-4-2 Trends in Defense-Related Expenditures (Original Budget)



(Notes) 1. Expenses for the introduction of new government aircraft are included in the budget for FY2015 to FY2022.
2. Expenses for the three-year emergency measures for disaster prevention, mitigation, and national resilience are included in the budget for FY2019 andFY2020.

2 Breakdown of Defense-Related Expenditures

1 Classification by Expenses

Defense-related expenditures are broadly classified into "personnel and food provision expenses," which cover items such as wages and meals for JSDF personnel, and "material expenses," which finance the procurement, repair and maintenance of equipment, the purchase of fuel, the education and training of JSDF personnel and others. Material expenses are further classified into "obligatory outlay expenses,"[3] which are paid based on contracts concluded in previous fiscal years, and "general material expenses," which are paid under current-year contracts. Material expenses are also referred to as "program expenses," and since general material expenses include repair costs for equipment, education and training expenses for personnel, and the purchase of fuel, they are referred to also as "activity expenses."

Personnel and food provision expenses as well as obligatory outlay expenses, both of which are mandatory expenses, account for 80% of total defense-related expenditures. Of the remaining 20%, a large portion consists of spending for maintenance purposes such as equipment repair, as well as expenses related to base measures to promote harmony among defense facilities and local communities.

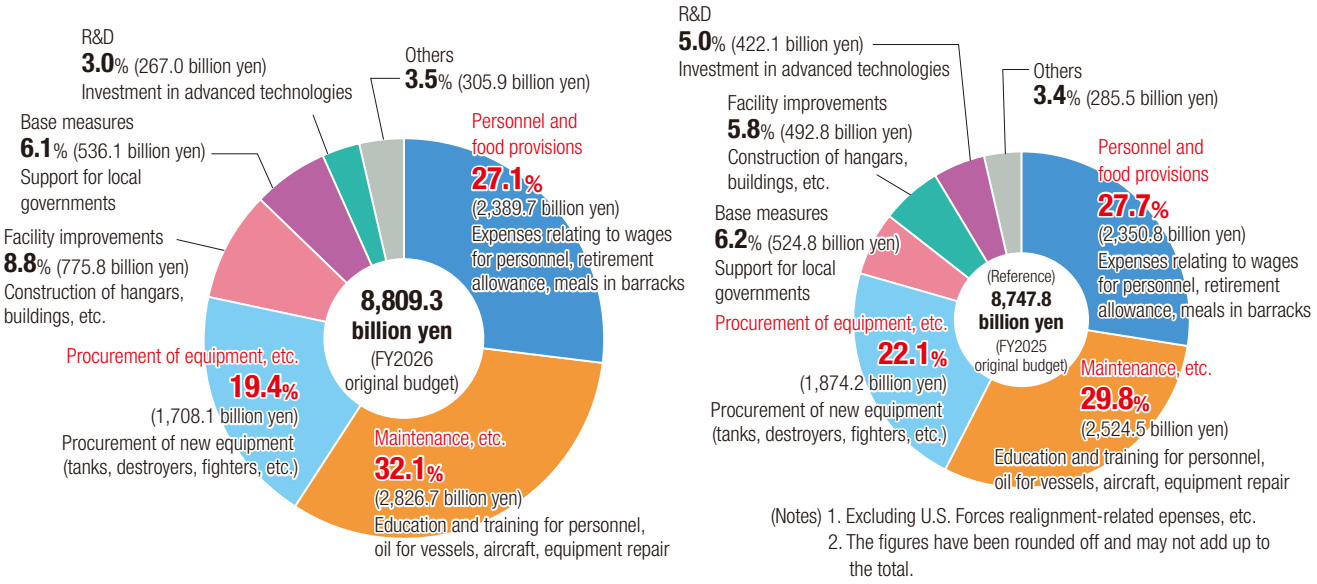
3 Some projects for the buildup of defense capabilities extend over multiple years. In these cases, the fiscal year in which the contract is concluded is different from the fiscal year in which the payment to the contractor is made. Therefore, the maximum obligation over later fiscal years is first allocated to the budget as a contract, resulting in a Treasury obligation (a type of budget that only grants the authority to incur obligations; the contracts can be concluded, but payment cannot be made). Based on such budgeting, in the fiscal year in which the construction is completed or the equipment is procured, the expenses necessary for payment are in principle allocated as a budget expenditure (a type of budget that grants the authority to incur obligations and to make payment; the contracts can be concluded and payment can be made). Budget expenditure for payments incurred under contracts concluded in previous fiscal years is called "obligatory outlay expenses," while expenditure for future fiscal years is termed "future obligations."

2 Classification by Purpose of Use

By purpose of use, defense-related expenditures are broadly classified into "personnel and food provision expenses," which cover items such as wages and meals for JSDF personnel; "equipment procurement expenses," which cover the procurement of new equipment (e.g., tanks, destroyers, fighter aircraft, etc.); "maintenance expenses," which cover items such as training and education of JSDF personnel, fuel for vessels and aircraft, and equipment repairs; "facility improvement expenses," which cover the construction of buildings such as aircraft hangars and barracks; and "research and development expenditures," which cover investments in cutting-edge technologies. In defense-related expenditures for FY2026, as with the previous three fiscal years, equipment procurement expenses and research and development expenditures together account for more than 20% of the total.

See Fig. II-2-4-3 (Classification of Defense-Related Expenditures by Purpose of Use (FY2026))

Fig. II-2-4-3 Classification of Defense-Related Expenditures by Purpose of Use (FY2026)



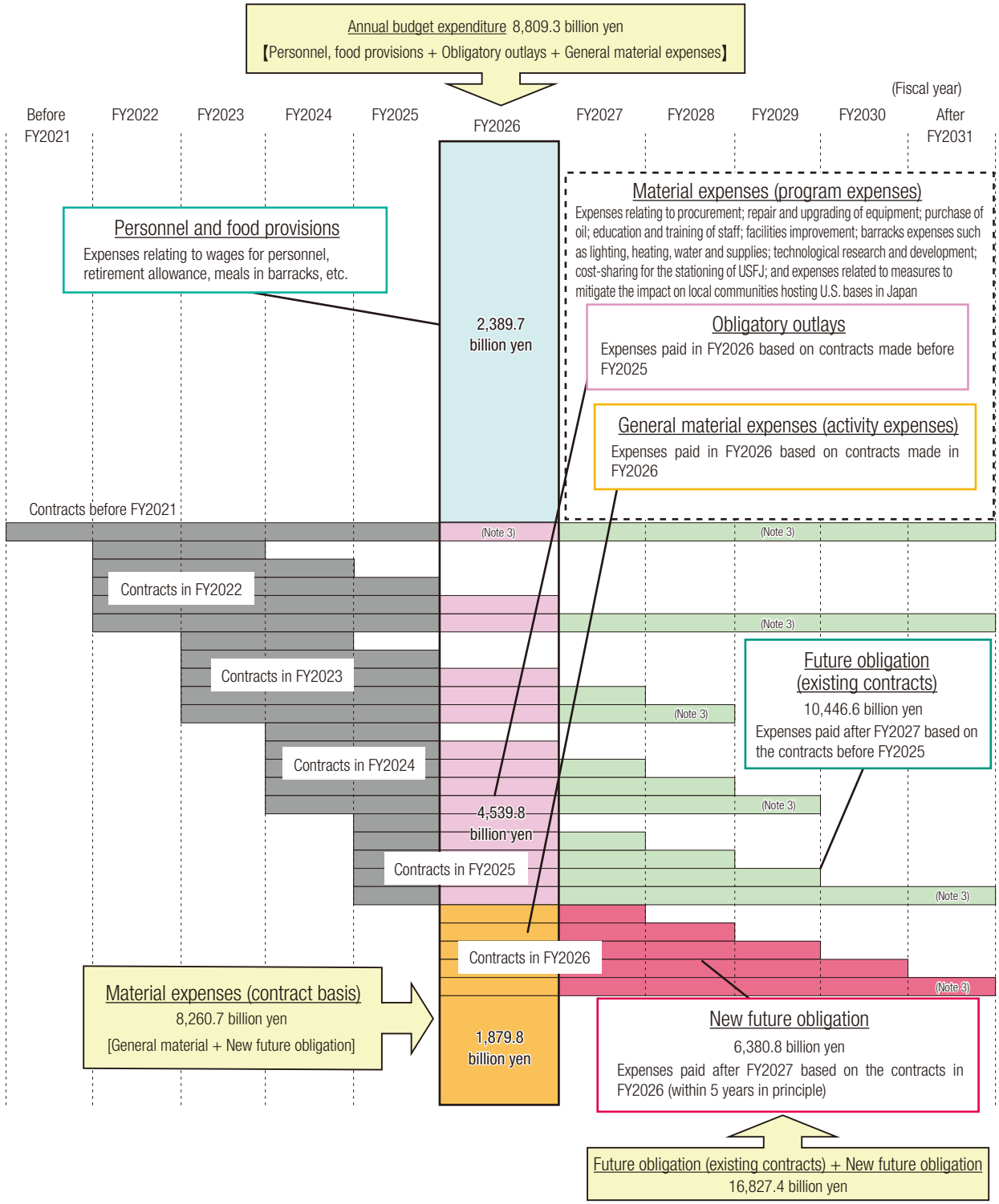
(Notes) 1. Excluding U.S. Forces realignment-related epenses, etc.
2. The figures have been rounded off and may not add up to the total.

3 Future Obligations Concerning New Contracts

See Fig. II-2-4-4 Structure of Defense-Related Expenditures

Apart from the annual budget expenditure, the future obligations concerning new contracts (the new future obligations arising in the applicable fiscal year) indicates payments for the following year and beyond. In the build-up of defense capabilities, it is common to take multiple years from contract to delivery or completion, in areas such as the procurement of vessels, aircraft, and other major equipment, as well as the construction of buildings such as aircraft hangars and barracks. Concerning these projects, while contracts covering multiple fiscal years are concluded in the applicable fiscal year in question, and payments for the next fiscal year and beyond (in principle, within five years) are promised in advance at the time of concluding the contract (the total of general material expenses and future obligations concerning new contracts is equal to the total amount of the contract concluded in that fiscal year (scale of projects), which is referred to as the "contract basis").

Fig. II-2-4-4 Structure of Defense-Related Expenditures



(Notes) 1 The figures above do not include SACO-related costs, costs to help mitigate the impact on local communities under U.S. Forces realignment-related expenses, and other such costs.
2 This is a conceptual diagram and the lengths of the graph do not necessarily correspond to the actual data.
3 Part of expenses, such as long-term contracts for the procurement of equipment, is paid for over five years.

3 Optimization Efforts

In the DBP, substantive funds will be secured by means such as thoroughly ensuring greater efficiency and streamlining of the buildup of defense capability. The FY2026 budget aims to realize a cost reduction of approximately 373.4 billion yen through initiatives shown below:

- The operation of equipment of declining importance due to obsolescence, etc., will be suspended and its use terminated. (cost reduction of 1.3 billion yen)
- Prices and procurement costs will be reduced by increasing predictability for companies and encouraging their efficient production through bulk purchase of equipment, including through long-term contracts. At the same time, comprehensive contracts, including Performance Based Logistics (PBL), under which payments are made according to the achievement of sustainment and maintenance outcomes, will be expanded. (cost reduction of 23.4 billion yen)
- Procurement time and life cycle costs will be reduced by narrowing down the JSDF's proprietary specifications through modularization, communalization, and the use of civilian goods. (cost reduction of 0.3 billion yen)
- In addition to reviewing projects with low cost-effectiveness, the cost of each project will be carefully managed, and the utilization of external personnel from private contractors will be expanded. (cost reduction of 53.0 billion yen)
- Prices of equipment and others will be reduced through such means as closer scrutiny of manufacturing processes and person-hours involved as well as of related expenses. (cost reduction of 295.4 billion yen)

See Part IV, Chapter 4 (Equipment Optimization Efforts)

4 Secure Financial Resources for Reinforcing Defense Capabilities

Fundamentally reinforced defense capabilities must be maintained and further reinforced into the future. Stably supporting such efforts requires solid financial resources. To secure financial resources for the stable sustainment of defense capabilities after FY2027 as well as for covering the DBP from FY2023 to FY2027, the DBP calls for implementing necessary measures in both expenditure and revenue, such as government expenditure reforms, the use of settlement surplus, creation of the Defense Buildup Fund utilizing non-tax revenues, and tax measures.

The Defense Buildup Fund was created under the Defense Financing Act,[4] enacted in 2023.

Additionally, the Government of Japan has decided to cover approximately three-quarters of the necessary financial resources by all available measures to minimize the burden on the public, including government expenditure reforms, utilizing the settlement surplus, and securing non-tax revenues. For the remaining approximately one-quarter that cannot be covered by these measures, the Government asks for cooperation through tax measures.

Specifically, the FY2023 Tax Reform Outline[5] called for implementing measures regarding corporate tax, income tax, and tobacco tax in phases over several years to secure just over 1 trillion yen for FY2027. The FY2025 Tax Reform Outline[6] presented specific details of these measures above, and based on that, the Act for Partial Amendment of the Income Tax Act (FY2025 Tax Reform Act) was enacted in March 2025. Under this Act, it was decided that a 4% surtax will be imposed on the portion which is the remainder after deducting 5 million yen from the corporate tax amount serving as the taxation standard starting in April 2026. For the tobacco tax, taxation on heated tobacco products will be revised for fairness from April 2026, and its the tax rate will be raised in phases from April 2027.

Furthermore, the FY2026 tax reform decided the following measures with respect to income tax: (1) A special income tax for defense will be imposed from January 2027 as a new 1% surtax on the amount of income tax. (2) The rate of the Special Income Tax for Reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake will be reduced by 1 percentage point, so as not to increase the tax burden for households in consideration of the current circumstances surrounding household finances. At the same time, the taxation period will be extended by 10 years through 2047 to ensure the total amount of financial resources for reconstruction and avoid affecting the steady implementation of reconstruction projects.

See Section 3 (Outline of the Defense Buildup Program)

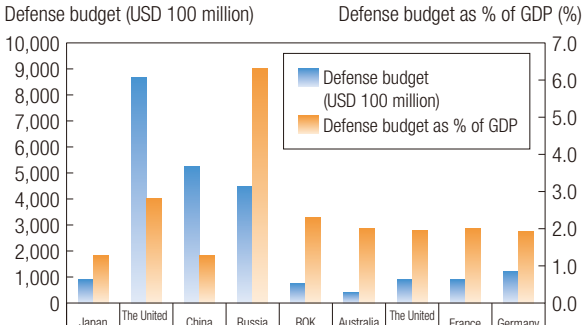
4 The Act on Special Measures for Securing Financial Resources Necessary for Fundamental Reinforcement of Defense Capabilities
5 The FY2023 Tax Reform Outline (Cabinet Decision on December 23, 2022)
6 The FY2025 Tax Reform Outline (Liberal Democratic Party and Komeito Decision on December 20, 2024)

5 Comparison with Other Countries

It is difficult to accurately make an international comparison of defense budgets due to several factors: there is no internationally unified definition of a defense budget; even if defense budgets are publicly disclosed, their breakdown is sometimes unclear; and the budget system varies by country.

On such a basis, if Japan's defense-related expenditures and the defense budgets of other countries officially published by each government were converted into dollar amounts using the purchasing power parity[7] of each country reported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and if a comparison was made in terms of the ratio of the defense budget to GDP (gross domestic product), the results would be as shown in Fig. II-2-4-5 (Comparison with Defense Budgets of Major Countries [FY2025]).

Fig. II-2-4-5 Comparison with Defense Budget of Major Countries (FY2025)



	Japan	The United States	China	Russia	ROK	Australia	The United Kingdom	France	Germany
Defense budget	892	8,684	5,245	4,507	755	421	893	892	1,225
Defense budget as % of GDP	1.28	2.82	1.27	6.32	2.30	2.01	1.97	2.01	1.93
(Reference) The percentage of GDP based on defense budget published by NATO	—	3.19	—	—	—	—	2.31	2.05	2.39
Defense budget per person (approx. USD○)	725	2,501	370	3,130	1,460	1,559	1,283	1,337	1,456
Defense budget per person (approx. ○ ten thousand yen)	7	24	4	30	14	15	12	13	14

(Notes) 1 This defense budget are based on those officially published by each country (DoD budget for the United States) and are converted to U.S. dollars, using each country's purchasing power parity (PPP) for FY2025 as published by the OECD (officially published rate as of April 2026). (1 U.S. dollar = 95.000342 yen = 3.402817 yuan = 29.960469 rubles = 811.543535 won = 1.364388 Australian dollars = 0.669798 pound = 0.672634 euros (France exchange rate) = 0.70529 euros (Germany exchange rate)
2 The amounts of defense budget published by China appear to be only part of its actual expenses for military purpose. According to analysis from the U.S. DoD, China's actual defense budget much more than in its published defense budget.
3 The percentage of GDP is calculated based on defense budget officially published by each country (in local currency) using the GDP of each country published by the IMF (in local currency).
4 As defense budget published by NATO (which include pensions for retired veterans, etc.) may differ from those officially published by each country, the percentage of GDP based on defense budget published by NATO (in March 2026) does not necessarily coincide with the percentage of GDP calculated based on defense budget officially published by each country.
5 Defense budget per person are calculated using the populations published by the UNFPA (State of the World Population 2025).
6 According to a SIPRI Fact Sheet (published in April 2026), global defense budget represented 2.5% of global GDP in 2025, and defense budget represented 1.4% of Japan's GDP.

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) member countries and other countries have committed to appropriate their defense budget that is commensurate with their respective economic capabilities in order to maintain the security environment. In the case of Japan, looking at its defense budget as a percentage of GDP has a certain significance as an indicator for the reinforcement of its defense capabilities in light of changes in the security environment in the international community. Accordingly, in FY2027, as per its own judgement, Japan was to take the necessary measures to make the level of its budget, for both the fundamental reinforcement of defense capabilities and complementary initiatives, reach 2% of the GDP at the time of the formulation of the National Security Strategy (NSS) (FY2022), through building on the contents of necessary defense capabilities under the NSS, and by taking into account indexes of international comparison, with a view to coordination with Japan's ally, like-minded countries, and others. However, in light of the security environment, which is growing more severe at an increasingly rapid pace, the government implemented measures ahead of the original schedule during FY2025 as the total of the initial and supplementary budgets.[8]

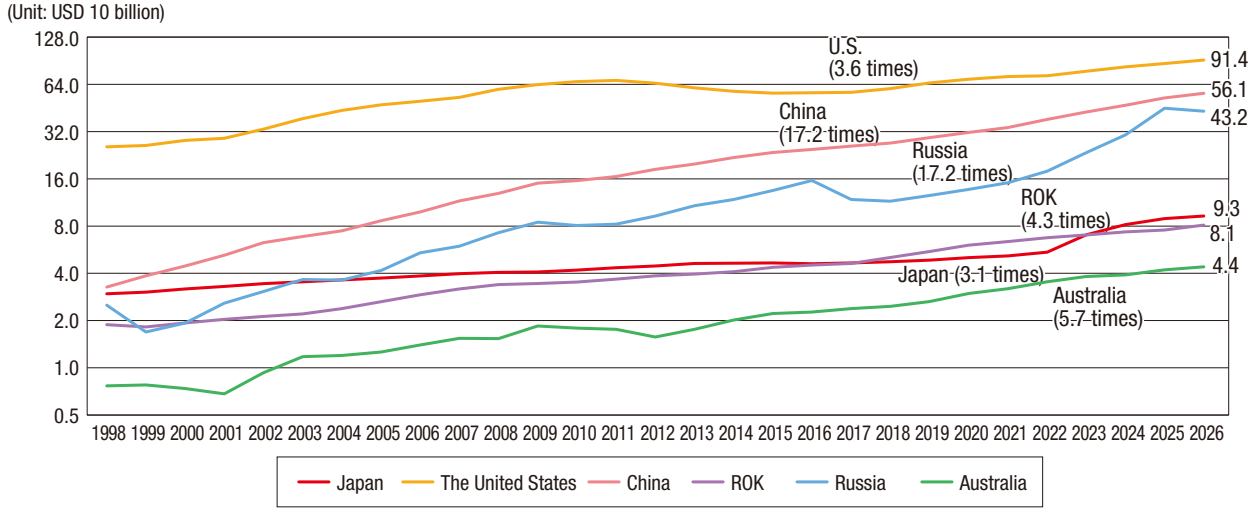
In addition, Fig. II-2-4-6 (Trends in Defense Budgets of Major Countries) shows the trends in the defense budgets of major countries since 1998.

See Part I, Chapter 3, Section 9 (Europe and Canada); Reference 11 (Trend of Defense Expenditures of Major Countries)

7 A gauge that measures each country's ability to purchase goods and services by taking into account their respective price levels. Although there also exists a method of converting their defense budget into dollar amounts at respective currency rates, their dollar-based defense budget calculated in this way do not necessarily reflect the precise value based on each country's price levels.

8 The aggregate of DBP-related expenditures and expenditures "for complementary initiatives" in FY2025 amounts to approximately 11.0 trillion yen, including both the initial and supplementary budget. This represents about 2.0% of Japan's GDP for the fiscal year in which the NSS was formulated (FY2022).

Fig. II-2-4-6 Trends in Defense Budget of Major Countries



(Notes)1 Regarding the defense budget of the six countries, figures officially published by the government of each country were converted into U.S. dollars amounts, using the purchasing power parity for each year (published by the OECD as of April 2026). Incidentally, the values for 2026 were converted into USD with the purchasing power parity for 2025, because the one for 2026 has not been published yet for now.

2 Japan's defense-related expenditure shows its original budget (excluding SACO-related expenses, the U.S. Forces realignment-related expenses (the portion allocated for mitigating the impact on local communities), and expenses for the three-year emergency response plan for disaster prevention, disaster mitigation, and building national resilience, etc.)

3 The amount and year-on-year growth rate (figures rounded to one decimal place) for FY1998-FY2026 are indicated.

Chapter 3

Organizations Responsible for Japan's Security and Defense

Section 1 National Security Council

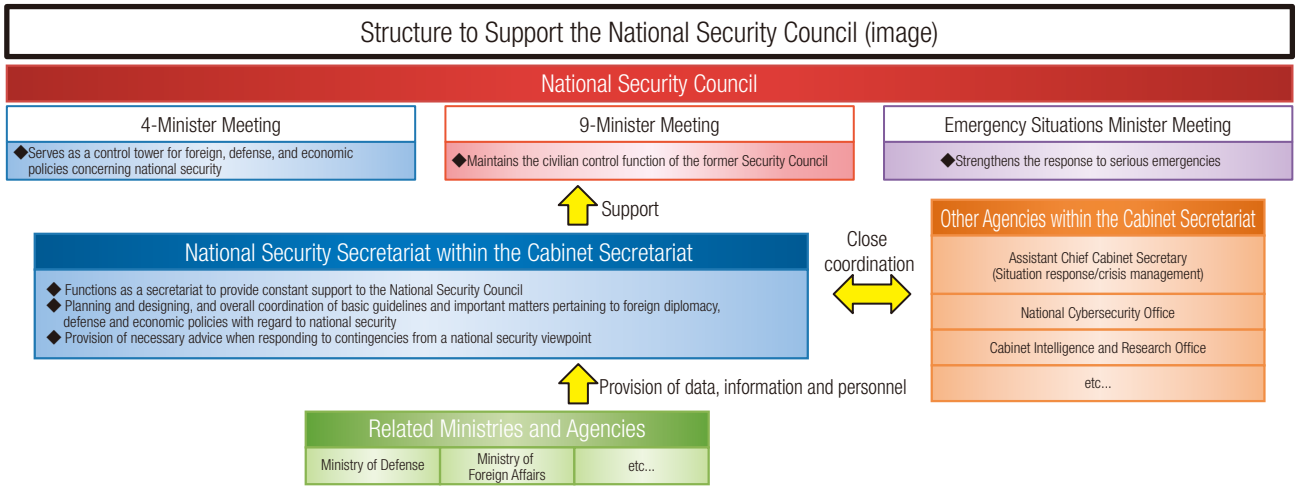
Japan's security environment is the most severe and complex since the end of World War II, and the security challenges that it needs to address are becoming more serious. Under such circumstances, it is necessary to carry forward the policies pertaining to national security from a strategic perspective under strong political leadership with the Prime Minister at its core. For this reason, the National Security Council, which was established in the Cabinet to provide a platform to discuss important matters with regard to Japan's security, has been serving as a control tower for foreign, defense, and economic policies pertaining to national security. Since its establishment in December 2013, the Council has met 369 times (as of the end of March 2026). The National Security Strategy (NSS), National Defense Strategy (NDS), and Defense Buildup Program (DBP) formulated in 2022 have also been deliberated and approved in the National Security Council.

The National Security Secretariat established within the Cabinet Secretariat provides constant support to the National Security Council as its secretariat. The Secretariat is also tasked with the planning, design, and overall coordination of basic guidelines and important matters with regard to foreign, defense, and economic policies pertaining to national security. The Secretariat is provided with human resources and information by the ministries and agencies closely related in terms of policy. The Secretariat has many civilians and uniformed JSDF personnel of the MOD with concurrent posts, who are engaged in policy planning and formulation, as well as the utilization of respective specialized knowledge. In addition, the MOD/JSDF shares global military trends and other information in a timely manner.

The enhanced ability to formulate national security policies has led to the institutional development of Japan's national security framework, and to providing policy direction with regard to new security challenges. Furthermore, individual defense policies are formulated and efforts to accelerate decision-making are made based on the basic guidelines discussed at the National Security Council, and this is contributing significantly to improved development and implementation of policies within the MOD/JSDF.

See Fig. II-3-1-1 (Organization of the National Security Council)

Fig. II-3-1-1 Organization of the National Security Council



Section 2 Organization of the MOD/JSDF

1 Organizational Structure Supporting Defense Capability

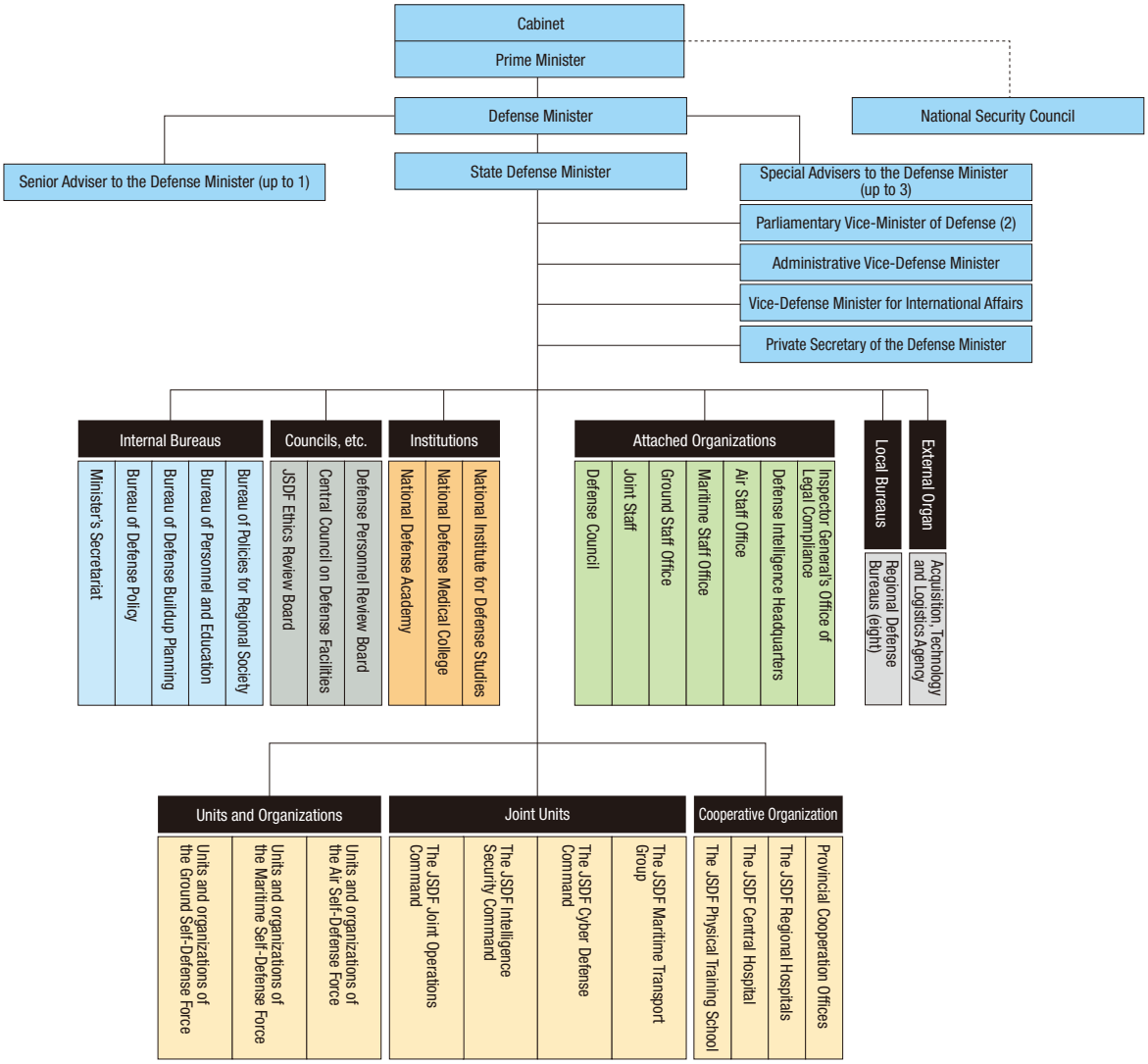
1 Organization of the MOD/JSDF

To fulfill its mission of defending Japan, the MOD/JSDF consists of various organs, mainly the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces as armed organization.

The MOD and the JSDF refer to the same organization. Whereas the term "Ministry of Defense" refers to the administrative aspects of the organization, which manages and administers the GSDF, the MSDF, and the ASDF, the term "JSDF" refers to the operational aspects whose mission is to defend Japan.

See Fig. II-3-2-1 (Organizational Chart of the MOD/JSDF); Fig. II-3-2-2 (Outline of the MOD/JSDF); Fig. II-3-2-3 (Organizational Diagram of the JSDF (As of the End of FY2025)); Fig. II-3-2-4 (Location of Principal JSDF Units (for illustrative purposes) (As of March 31, 2026)); Fig. II-3-2-5 (Breakdown of Ministry of Defense Employees, etc. (As of March 31, 2026))

Fig. II-3-2-1 Organizational Chart of the MOD/JSDF



*During the 221st Extraordinary Session of the Diet, a bill to partially amend the Act for Establishment of the MOD and related laws was passed and enacted. The bill includes measures such as increasing the number of State Defense Ministers from one to two and reorganizing the Japan Air Self-Defense Force into the Japan Aerospace Self-Defense Force.

Fig. II-3-2-2 Outline of the MOD/JSDF

Organization	Outline
Internal Bureaus	● Responsible for basic policy relating to the duties of the MOD/JSDF (defense and security affairs, basic conduct of the JSDF [political and administrative affairs such as planning and drafting of laws and regulations or government-level policies], personnel affairs, budgets, etc.) ● Composed of the Bureau of Defense Policy, Bureau of Defense Buildup Planning, Bureau of Personnel and Education, and Bureau of Policies for Regional Society, in addition to the Minister's Secretariat
Joint Staff	● A staff organization for the Defense Minister concerning the operation of the JSDF ● Responsible for making plans on defense and security affairs concerning joint operation and making action plans ● The Minister's commands concerning the operations of the JSDF are delivered through the Chief of Staff, JS and orders concerning operations of the JSDF are executed by the Chief of Staff, JS.
Ground Staff Office Maritime Staff Office Air Staff Office	● Staff organizations for the Defense Minister concerning the duties of each JSDF unit ● Responsible for making plans on defense and security affairs of each JSDF unit and making plans on buildup of defense capabilities, education and training
Ground Self-Defense Force	● Ground Component Command • Composed mainly of airborne brigades, amphibious rapid deployment brigades, etc. • Realization of unified command over GSDF troops ● Regional Armies • Composed of multiple divisions and brigades, and other directly controlled units (such as engineer brigades and antiaircraft artillery groups) • There are five regional armies, each mainly in charge of the defense of their respective regions. ● Divisions and Brigades Composed of combat units, combat support units, logistics support units and others
Maritime Self-Defense Force	● Self-Defense Fleet • Consists of key units such as the Fleet Surface Force, the Fleet Air Force (consisting of fixed-wing patrol aircraft units and the like), and the Fleet Submarine Force • Responsible for the defense of sea areas surrounding Japan primarily through mobile operations ● Regional Districts There are four regional districts who mainly protect their responsible territories and support the Self-Defense Fleet.
Air Self-Defense Force	● Air Defense Command • Composed of four air defense forces • Primarily responsible for general air defense duties ● Air Defense Force Composed of key units such as air wings (including fighter aircraft units and others), the Aircraft Control and Warning Wing (including aircraft warning and control units), and Air Defense Missile Groups (including surface-to-air guided missile units and others)
National Defense Academy of Japan	● An institution for educating and training personnel who will become commissioned officers of the JSDF ● Offers a science and engineering postgraduate course and a comprehensive security postgraduate course equivalent to master's or doctoral degree from a university (undergraduate and postgraduate courses)
National Defense Medical College	● An institution for the cultivation of future JSDF medical personnel ● An institution for the cultivation of future JSDF officers who are public health nurses, nurses, and JSDF engineering personnel ● Offers a graduate medical course equivalent to PhD programs at medical universities based on the School Education Law
National Institute for Defense Studies	● National security-related academic research and education institute ● Conducts basic research and study related to the administration and operation of the JSDF • Conducts research and study on security • Conducts research and study and compiles data on military history • Management and publication of data on military history ● Educates and trains JSDF personnel and other senior officials
Defense Intelligence Headquarters	● Central intelligence organization of the Ministry of Defense, which collects, analyzes and reports on information related to Japan's national security • Collects various military information including imagery and geographical information, signal data, and publicized information; comprehensively analyzes and assesses the information; and provides intelligence to related organizations within the ministry and relevant ministries and agencies • Consists of the Directorate for Administration, Directorate for Planning, Directorate for Joint Intelligence, Directorate for Geospatial Intelligence, and Directorate for Signal Intelligence, as well as six communication sites
Inspector General's Office of Legal Compliance	● Organization that inspects overall tasks of the MOD/JSDF from an independent position
Regional Defense Bureau (eight locations nationwide)	● Local Bureaus in charge of comprehensive defense administration in regional areas • Conducts cost audit, supervision, and inspection related to the procurement of equipment by ensuring understanding and cooperation of local public organizations, and acquiring, managing, building and constructing defense facilities, and taking measures concerning neighborhood of the base • Consists of eight Regional Defense Bureaus (Hokkaido, Tohoku, North Kanto, South Kanto, Kinki-Chubu, Chugoku-Shikoku, Kyushu and Okinawa)
Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency	● An external bureau in charge of effective and efficient procurement of defense equipment and international defense equipment and technology cooperation • Implementation of constant project management throughout the life cycle of defense equipment from an integrated perspective • Smooth and prompt reflection of each unit's operational needs in equipment procurement • Proactive initiatives in new areas (further internationalization of defense equipment and investments in advanced technological research, etc.) • Achievement of procurement reform and, at the same time, maintenance and strengthening of defense production and of the technological and industrial bases of defense

Fig. II-3-2-3 Organizational Diagram of the JSDF (As of the End of FY2025)

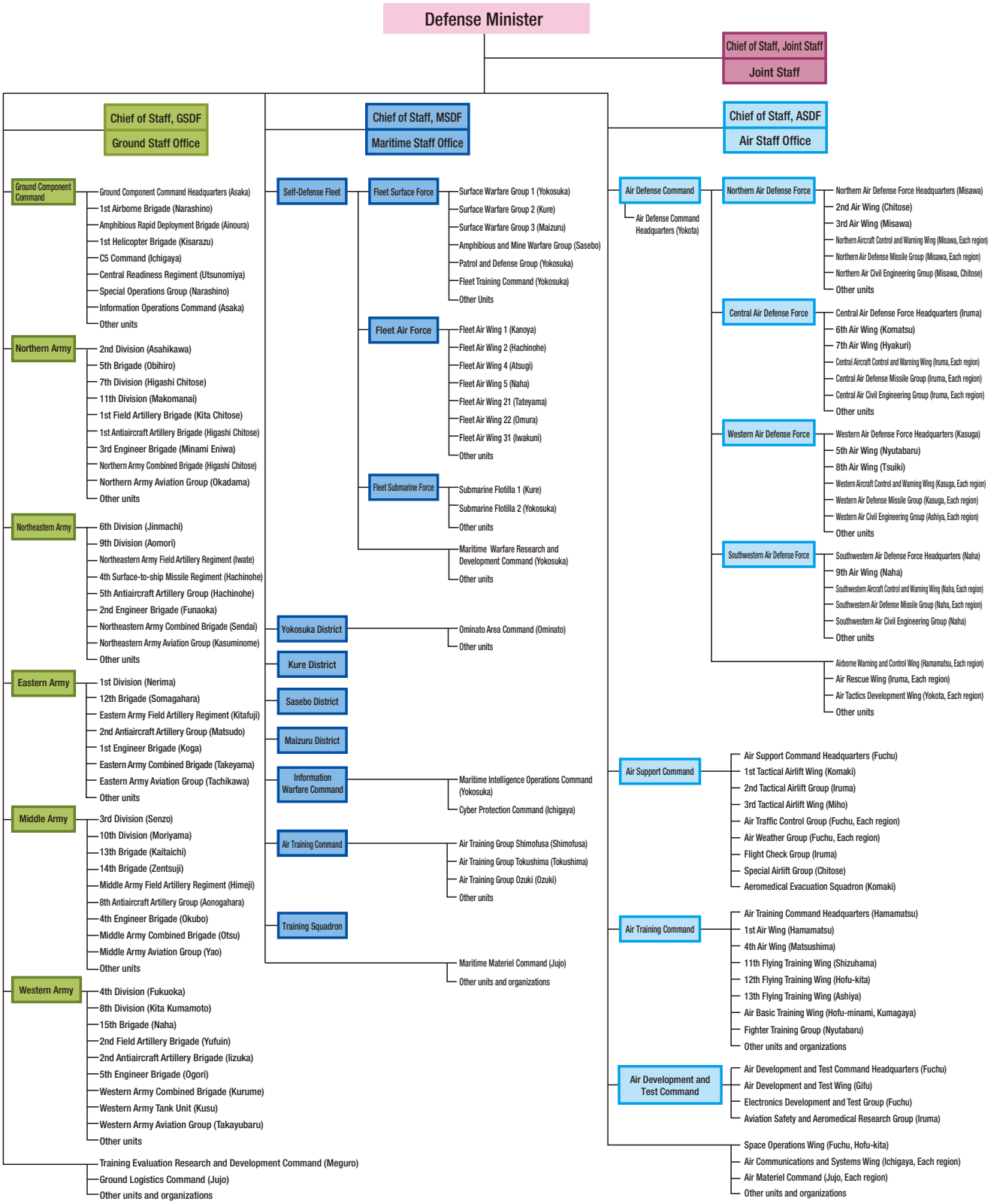


Fig. II-3-2-4 Location of Principal JSDF Units (for illustrative purposes) (As of March 31, 2026)



Fig. II-3-2-5 Breakdown of Ministry of Defense Employees, etc. (As of March 31, 2026)

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2"></th><th colspan="2">Special Service</th><th colspan="2">Regular Service</th></tr>
<tr><th>Authorized Strength</th><th>Non-Authorized Strength</th><th>Authorized Strength</th><th>Non-Authorized Strength</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="10">Defense Minister
State Defense Minister
Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense (2)
Senior Adviser to the Defense Minister (up to 1)
Special Adviser to the Defense Minister (up to 3)</td><td>Private Secretary of the Defense Minister</td><td></td><td rowspan="10">Defense Officials, Instructors, and others 25</td><td rowspan="10">Part-Time Officials</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">JSDF Personnel</td></tr>
<tr><td>Administrative Vice-Defense Minister</td><td>Candidates for JSDF Personnel</td></tr>
<tr><td>Vice-Defense Minister for International Affairs</td><td>Reserve Personnel 47,900</td></tr>
<tr><td>Director, Director General, and others 882</td><td>Ready Reserve Personnel 7,981</td></tr>
<tr><td>Civilian Officials and others 20,345</td><td>Candidates for Reserve Personnel 4,621</td></tr>
<tr><td>Uniformed JSDF Personnel 247,154</td><td>National Defense Academy students</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4"></td><td>National Defense Medical College students</td></tr>
<tr><td>GSDF High Technical School students</td></tr>
<tr><td>Part-Time Officials</td></tr>
</table>

(Notes) 1. Number of personnel refers to the numbers specified in the laws and regulations (the statutory authorized number of JSDF personnel)
2. "etc." in the title includes Defense Minister, State Defense Minister, Parliamentary Vice-Ministers of Defense, Senior Adviser to the Defense Minister, and Private Secretary of the Defense Minister

2 Systems to Support the Defense Minister

The Defense Minister takes charge of and manages the matters relevant to national defense as the competent minister, and superintends the affairs of the JSDF in accordance with the provisions of the Self-Defense Forces Law. The State Defense Ministers, the Parliamentary Vice-Ministers of Defense, and the Senior Adviser to the Defense Minister assist the Defense Minister. There are also the Special Advisers to the Defense Minister, who advise the Defense Minister. The Defense Council deliberates on basic principles related to the MOD. Furthermore, there are the Administrative Vice-Defense Minister, who assists the Defense Minister, coordinates the affairs of the ministry, and supervises the affairs of relevant bureaus, departments and organs, and the Vice-Defense Minister for International Affairs, who collectively coordinates affairs such as international relations.

In FY2026, in order to establish a structure capable of fully preparing for all contingencies while also effectively addressing the growing range of policy challenges, the number of State Defense Minister was increased from one to two.

Moreover, Internal Bureaus of the ministry, Japan Joint Staff, Ground Staff Office, Maritime Staff Office, Air Staff Office, and the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA), as an external bureau, have been established in the MOD. The Internal Bureaus of the MOD are responsible for basic policy relating to the affairs of the MOD/JSDF. The Minister's Secretariat and the Directors-General of each Bureau within the Internal Bureaus, along with the Commissioner of ATLA who is in charge of defense equipment administration, support the Defense Minister from a policy perspective.

The Japan Joint Staff is a staff organization for the Defense Minister concerning the operation of the JSDF. The Japan Joint Staff Chief of Staff, Japan Joint Staff provides centralized support for the operations of the JSDF for the Defense Minister from a military expert's perspective. The Ground Staff Office, Maritime Staff Office, and Air Staff Office are the staff organizations for the Defense Minister concerning their respective affairs except operations of the JSDF. The Chiefs of Staff for the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF), the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF), and the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) act as the top ranking expert advisers to the Defense Minister regarding these affairs.

In this manner, the MOD has ensured well-balanced support from both a policy perspective and a military expert's perspective, like the two wheels of a cart that allows the Defense Minister to make appropriate decisions.

See Chapter 1, Section 2-3-4 (Securing Civilian Control)

3 Base of Defense Administration in Regional Areas

The MOD has Regional Defense Bureaus in eight locations across the country (Sapporo City, Sendai City, Saitama City, Yokohama City, Osaka City, Hiroshima City, Fukuoka City, and Kadena Town) as its local branches in charge of comprehensive defense administration.

In addition to implementing measures to promote harmony between defense facilities and local communities and inspecting equipment, the Regional Defense Bureaus adopt various measures to obtain the understanding and cooperation of both local governments and local residents toward the activities of the MOD/JSDF.

See Part III, Chapter 4, Section 1 (Measures to Harmonize with Local Communities)

2 Joint Operations System of the JSDF

In order to rapidly and effectively fulfill the duties of the JSDF, the MOD/JSDF has adopted the joint operations system in which the GSDF, the MSDF, and the ASDF are operated integrally. Furthermore, it works toward building an architecture that is capable of realizing cross-domain operations in domains such as space, cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum.

The Japan Joint Staff is responsible for joint operations of the JSDF. It is headed by the Japan Joint Staff Chief of Staff, Japan Joint Staff, who develops a joint operations concept for JSDF operations, and centrally supports the Defense Minister on JSDF operations from a military expert's perspective. The Defense Minister's commands concerning the operations of the JSDF are delivered through the Japan Joint Staff Chief of Staff, Japan Joint Staff, and the Defense Minister's orders concerning operations of the JSDF are executed by the Japan Joint Staff Chief of Staff, Japan Joint Staff. In doing this, the Defense Minister's commands and orders are delivered through the Japan Joint Staff Chief of Staff, Japan Joint Staff not only in cases where two or more JSDF units are employed, but also in cases where a single JSDF unit is employed to respond.

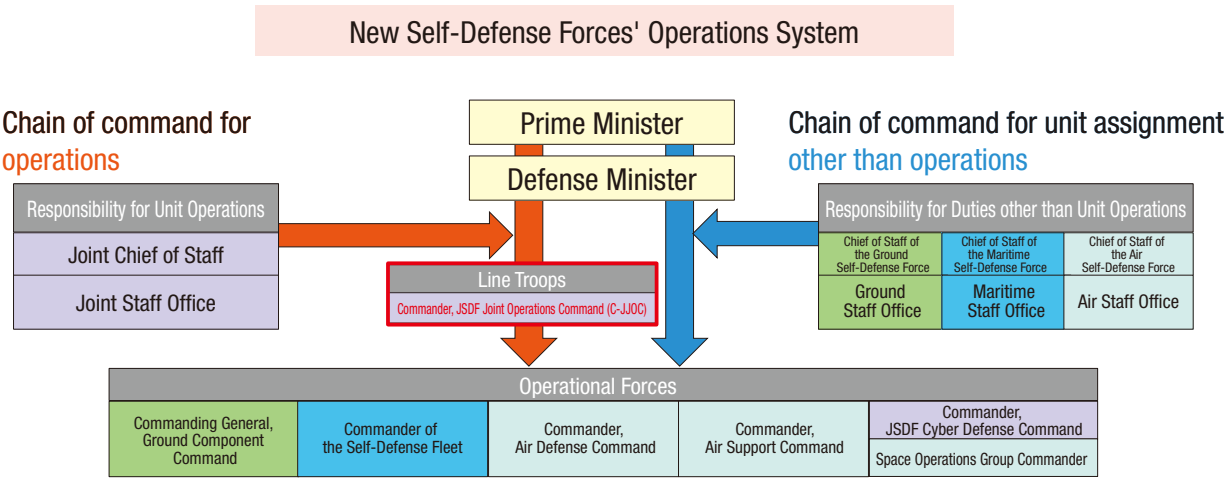
The Japan Joint Staff undertakes functions relating to the operations of the JSDF, while the Ground, Maritime and Air Staff Offices undertake functions for unit maintenance, such as personnel affairs, building-up defense capability, and education and training.

3 The JSDF Joint Operations Command

The National Defense Strategy and the Defense Buildup Program call for the establishment of a permanent Joint Headquarters that facilitates the centralized command of the GSDF, the MSDF, and the ASDF units. The aim is to build a system that enables seamless cross-domain operations at all stages from peacetime to contingency, with the aim of strengthening the effectiveness of joint operations of all JSDF services. To this end, in March 2025, the MOD/JSDF established the JSDF Joint Operations Command (JJOC) in Ichigaya as the permanent Joint Headquarters, which is headed by the Commander, JSDF Joint Operations Command (C-JJOC).

See Fig. II-3-2-6 (Operations System of the JSDF and the JSDF Joint Operations Command (JJOC))

Fig. II-3-2-6 Operations System of the JSDF and the JSDF Joint Operations Command (JJOC)



1 Significance

Before the establishment of the JJOC, an ad hoc joint task force[1] consisting of any two or more units from the GSDF, the MSDF, and the ASDF was temporarily organized as needed to conduct joint operations. Under such a system, however, the JSDF could not quickly establish a flexible defense posture in response to the situation and transition. It was also difficult to establish the necessary posture for cross-domain operations on a regular basis.

The establishment of the JJOC allows for the unification of the command of joint operations by the GSDF, the MSDF, and the ASDF on a daily basis. It enables the training of cross-domain operation capabilities from peacetime, which improves the effectiveness of joint operations and makes it continuously possible to respond swiftly to contingencies and make decisions rapidly.

Chief of Staff, Japan Joint Staff has coordinated with both the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who is in charge of mid- to long-term U.S. military strategies, and the Commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, who is in charge of bilateral operations between the JSDF and the U.S. Forces. The establishment of JJOC and C-JJOC has enabled closer coordination with the U.S. Forces on operations and has strengthened bilateral response capabilities.

2 Relations between the JJOC and the Japan Joint Staff

The Japan Joint Staff is a staff organization that supports the Defense Minister with regard to the operations of the JSDF from a military expert's perspective. The JJOC, on the other hand, is a newly established unit designed to centrally command the GSDF, MSDF, and the ASDF units across Japan as to operations of the JSDF from peacetime, which has not existed as a permanent function of the JSDF before.

With regard to the operation of the JSDF, the Defense Minister has commanded through the Chief of Staff, Japan Joint Staff, and orders of the Minister have been executed by the Chief of Staff. Even after the establishment of the JJOC, the Chief of Staff is to transmit the Minister's orders on JSDF operations to the JJOC and other units, and to give detailed instructions within the scope of such commands and orders.

Thus, the purpose and positioning of the two organizations are different, and the role of the Japan Joint Staff will not change with the establishment of the JJOC. The JJOC and C-JJOC clearly separate roles with the Japan Joint Staff headed by the Chief of Staff.

The establishment of the JJOC and the introduction of a new function enabling the centralized operation of GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF units nationwide from peacetime have improved the effectiveness of joint operations and enabled rapid response to situations and decision-making constantly.

1 This refers to cases where a special unit is organized to carry out a specific mission or where required units are placed under the OPCON of a commander other than a commander to whom the unit is subordinated, in accordance with Article 22, Paragraph 1 or 2 of the Self-Defense Forces Law; the unit consists of any two or more units from the GSDF, the MSDF, and the ASDF. In order to quickly and effectively carry out various missions such as ballistic missile defense and large-scale disasters response, it is necessary to operate the GSDF, the MSDF, and the ASDF in an integrated manner. Therefore, under a single commander, a joint task force is organized across the GSDF, the MSDF, and the ASDF. For simultaneous responses to multiple situations such as contingencies and disasters, a separate joint task force can be organized even after the JJOC establishment.

Chapter 4

Framework for the JSDF Activities

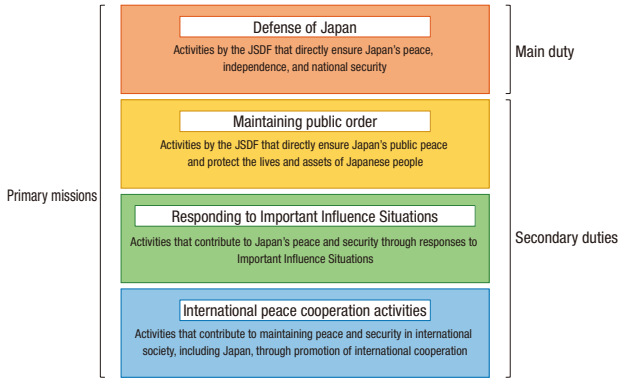
1 Duties of the JSDF

Article 3 in the Self-Defense Forces Law differentiates main duties (item 1 of the Article) and secondary duties (items 1 and 2 of the Article) of the Japan Self-Defense Forces' (JSDF) duties. Defense Operations to defend Japan correspond to main duty, which only the JSDF can carry out.

Secondary duties consist of "duties for maintaining public order as necessary" (secondary duties under item 1) and "duties defined by other laws to an extent that does not interfere with the main duty" (secondary duties under item 2). The former includes Public Security Operations and Maritime Security Operations that allow the JSDF to respond when police entities cannot handle a situation on their own, destruction measures against ballistic missiles or other objects, disaster relief operations, and countermeasures against airspace violation. The latter covers responses to Important Influence Situations and international peace cooperation activities. These main and secondary duties are jointly known as "primary missions."[1]

See Fig. II-4-1 (Overview of the JSDF's Duties); Reference 12 (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)

Fig. II-4-1 Overview of the JSDF's Duties



2 Defense of Japan

1 Armed Attack Situation/ Anticipated Armed Attack Situation and Survival-Threatening Situation

The Armed Attack Situation Response Act[2] is aimed at establishing a system to respond to **Armed Attack Situation** or **Anticipated Armed Attack Situation** and **Survival-Threatening Situation**, thereby contributing to the peace and independence of Japan as well as the safety of the

KEY WORD **Survival-Threatening Situation**

"Survival-Threatening Situation" means a situation where an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs, which as a result, threatens Japan's survival and poses a clear danger of fundamentally overturning Japanese people's right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.

KEY WORD **Armed Attack Situation and Anticipated Armed Attack Situation**

"Armed Attack Situation" refers to a situation where an external armed attack against Japan occurs or in which it is recognized that clear danger of an external armed attack against Japan is imminent. "Anticipated Armed Attack Situation" refers to a situation that is not yet an armed attack situation but in which circumstances are critical and an armed attack against Japan is anticipated.

1 Activities to be performed by the JSDF to leverage its skills, experience, and organizational functions developed over years are known as "side duties" to distinguish them from primary missions. They include transportation for national guests who visit Japan to attend a Summit meeting, commissioned construction work such as park grading and road construction carried out as part of education and training, and cooperation with athletic events, such as Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, and the National Sports Festivals.

2 Act on the Peace and Independence of Japan and Maintenance of the National and the People's Security in Armed Attack Situations, Anticipated Armed Attack Situations, and Survival-Threatening Situations

country and the people. The Act specifies items that should be stipulated as basic principles and basic policies (the Basic Response Plan), as well as the responsibilities of national and local governments, for responding to Anticipated Armed Attack Situation.

The Government will take action in accordance with the Act in the event of an Armed Attack Situation, such as a missile attack on Japan or an invasion of its remote islands, or a Survival-Threatening Situation.

When an Armed Attack Situation/Anticipated Armed Attack Situation or a Survival-Threatening Situation occurs, the Government will make a Cabinet Decision on a Basic Response Policy based on the Armed Attack Situation Response Act. Such a policy must stipulate the following items, which are subject to approval by the Diet.

(1) The following items concerning situations that need to be dealt with:

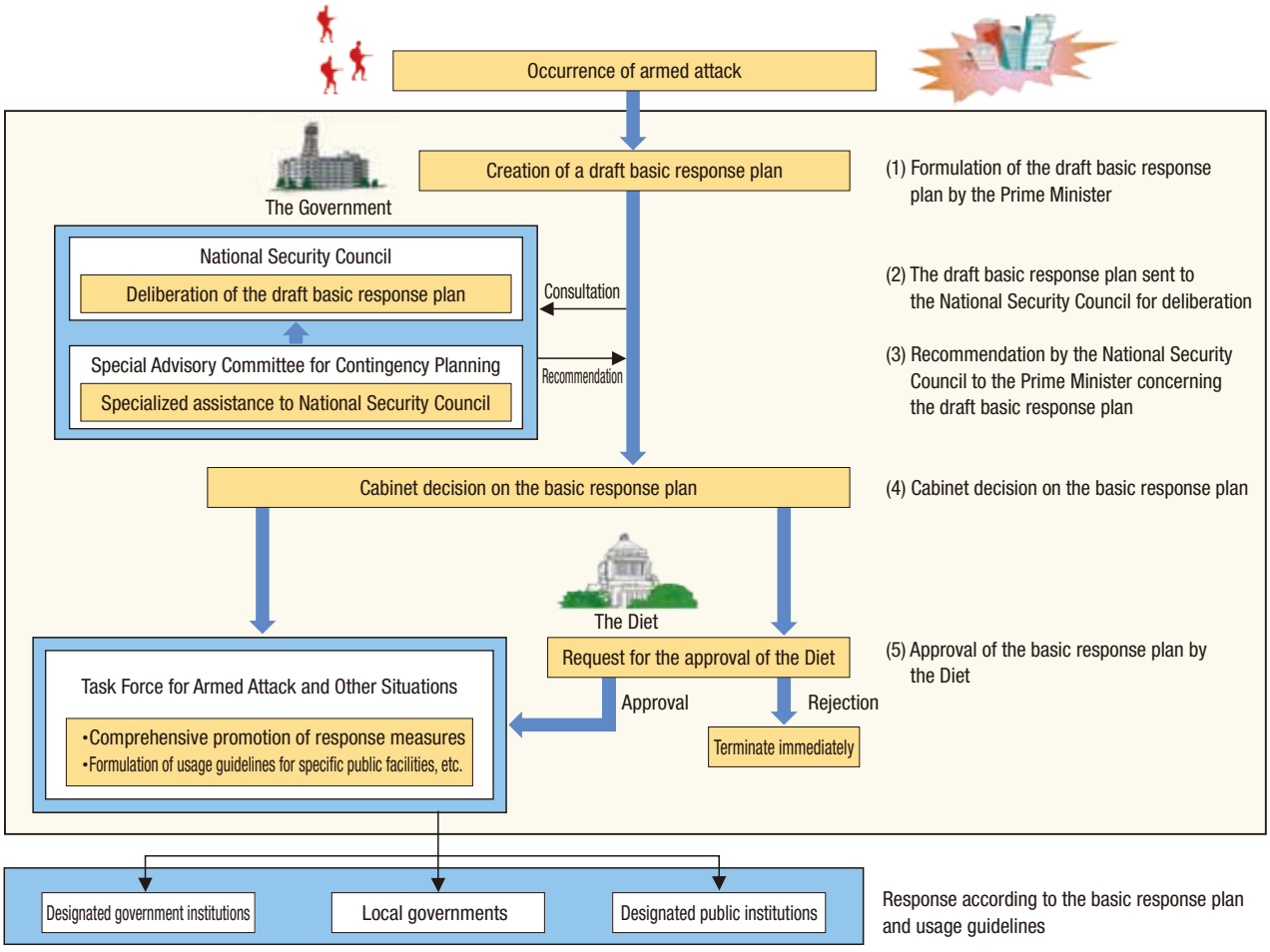
- The circumstances of the situation, the confirmation of an Armed Attack Situation/Anticipated Armed Attack Situation or a Survival-Threatening Situation, and the facts upon which such confirmation is based
- The reason why there are no other appropriate means available to ensure Japan's survival and to protect its people, and the use of force is deemed necessary to respond to the situation when an Armed Attack Situation/Anticipated Armed Attack Situation or a Survival-Threatening Situation is confirmed

(2) An overall plan related to the response

(3) Important matters related to the response measures important matters related to the response measures include the issuance of a Defense Operation order or requests for Diet approval to issue such orders, as described below, in the event of an Armed Attack Situation or a Survival-Threatening Situation.

See Fig. II-4-2 (Procedures for Responding to Armed Attack Situations/Anticipated Armed Attack Situations and Survival-Threatening Situations)

Fig. II-4-2 Procedures for Responding to Armed Attack Situations/Anticipated Armed Attack Situations and Survival-Threatening Situations



2 Responses of the JSDF

The Prime Minister may issue a Defense Operation order to the whole or part of the JSDF when it is deemed necessary for the defense of Japan in Armed Attack Situations and Survival-Threatening Situations. Prior Diet approval is required for a Defense Operation order in principle. The JSDF under Defense Operation duty is allowed to use force only when the Three Conditions for the "use of force" are met.

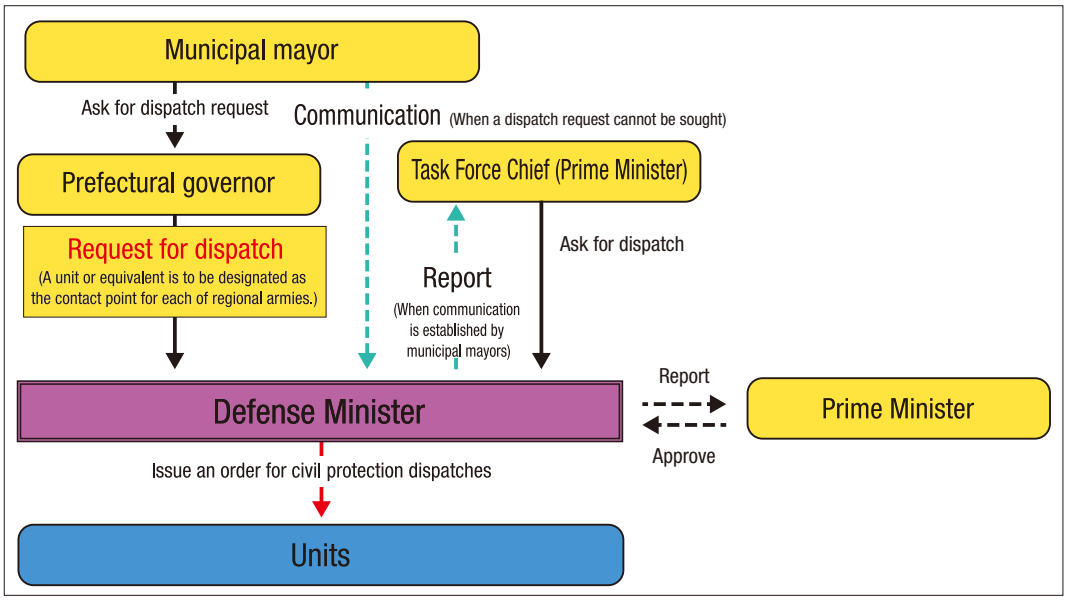
See Chapter 1, Section 2-2-2 (Measures for Self-Defense Permitted under Article 9 of the Constitution); Part III, Chapter1, Section 1-1 (Responses to Invasions of Japan, Large-Scale Terrorism, Etc.)

3 Civil Protection

The Civil Protection Act[3] specifies the responsibilities of the national and local governments, evacuation of residents, providing relief to evacuated residents, and responding to armed attack disasters; the aim is to protect the life, person, and property of the people and to minimize the impact on the livelihoods of the people in an Armed Attack Situation/ Anticipated Armed Attack Situation and during an emergency response.[4] If the Defense Minister deems it unavoidable after receiving a request from prefectural governors or a request from the Task Force Chief,[5] the Defense Minister may order JSDF units and organizations,[6] upon approval from the Prime Minister, to implement civil protection measures or emergency response protection measures including assisting with the evacuation of residents and immediate restoration.

See Fig. II-4-3 (Flow of Civil Protection Dispatches); Part III, Chapter 1, Section 2-6-2 (3) (Efforts on Civil Protection)

Fig. II-4-3 Flow of Civil Protection Dispatches



3 Maintenance of Public Order and Responses to Aggression That Do Not Amount to an Armed Attack

1 Public Security Operations

(1) Public Security Operations by Order

Based on Article 78 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, in the event of an indirect aggression[7] or other such emergency situations, the Prime Minister may order the whole or part of the JSDF to deploy if it is deemed impossible to maintain

3 This refers to a situation, as stipulated in Article 22-1 of the Armed Attack Situation Response Act, in which an act that kills or injures a large number of people by means similar to those of an armed attack occurs or in which the obvious danger of such an act occurring is recognized to be imminent and requires urgent action by the state.
4 Act Concerning the Measures for Protection of the People in Armed Attack Situation and Anticipated Armed Attack Situation
5 While the Prime Minister is to be appointed as the Director of the Crisis Management Headquarters, the two are stipulated separately.
6 Units and organizations of the GSDF, the MSDF, or the ASDF
7 A major internal riot or disturbance caused by the instigation or intervention by a foreign country

public security with the police forces. In this case, in principle, the Prime Minister must bring the order to the Diet for deliberation, and request for its approval within twenty days from the day the order has been given.

(2) Public Security Operations upon Request

Based on Article 81 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, the governor of a prefecture, upon consulting with the Public Safety Commission of the prefecture, may request the Prime Minister to dispatch units and organizations of the JSDF if it is deemed unavoidable as the situation will have a serious influence on public security. Following such a request, the Prime Minister may order the mobilization of the JSDF when he/she deems it unavoidable.

See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 1-1-7 (Responses to Large-Scale Terrorism and Attacks on Critical Infrastructure)

2 Critical Computing Systems Protection Measures (Effective October 1, 2026)

Based on Article 81-3 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, when the Government of Japan confirms a cyberattack to certain critical computers,[8] and is deemed to be an advanced cyberattack by state-sponsored actors and it is deemed especially necessary for the JSDF to respond,[9] the Prime Minister may order JSDF units to conduct remote access and neutralization measures[10] against the computers being used in the cyberattack in order to prevent damage.

Units ordered to implement such measures will respond jointly with the police under the command of the Defense Minister.

In carrying out remote access and neutralization measures, the Police Duties Execution Act[11] shall apply mutatis mutandis. Under the provisions of the same Act, prior approval from Active Cyber Defence Oversight Commission and consultation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs is required to ensure that measures are taken in a legitimate manner and consistent with international law.

See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 3-3 (Cybersecurity)

3 Maritime Security Operations

Based on Article 82 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, when there is a special need to protect lives or property or to maintain public security at sea,[12] the Defense Minister may order the JSDF units to take necessary actions at sea upon approval by the Prime Minister.

See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 1-2 (Responses to Unilateral Attempts to Change the Status Quo by Force)

4 Counter-Piracy Operations

Based on Article 82-2 of the Self-Defense Forces Law and Article 7 of the Counter-Piracy Measures Act,[13] when there is a special need to respond to acts of piracy, the Defense Minister may order JSDF units to conduct operations necessary to deal with piracy acts at sea upon approval by the Prime Minister.

See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 1-2-7 (1) (Counter-Piracy Operations)

5 Destruction Measures against Ballistic Missiles or Other Objects

In cases where ballistic missiles or other objects are flying to Japan as an armed attack or in a Survival-Threatening Situation, and where the “Three Conditions” are met, the JSDF may respond with the Defense Operation. On the other hand, in cases where ballistic missiles or other objects are flying to Japan but are not deemed to be an armed attack, the Defense Minister may take the following measures based on Article 82-3 of the Self-Defense Forces Law:

(1) If the Defense Minister judges that ballistic missiles or other objects are likely to fly to Japan and it is necessary to prevent damage to human lives and property in the Japanese territory, the Minister, upon the approval of the Prime Minister, may order the JSDF units to take measures to destroy the ballistic missiles or other objects actually flying to the country in the airspace over the Japanese territory or the high seas.

8 Critical computers used by national government agencies, local governments, core infrastructure, defense industries, and others to handle certain types of information

9 Specifically, when all of the following conditions are met: (1) there is a high likelihood of a situation arising that would seriously undermine the national and the people’s security; (2) the special technologies or information possessed by the JSDF are essential for preventing damage; and (3) there is a request from, or the consent of, the National Public Safety Commission.

10 Measures that are generally deemed necessary to prevent harm, including the deletion of programs being used in a cyberattack, and that are carried out via telecommunications lines for the purpose of preventing such harm

11 The authority granted to the police to implement remote access and neutralization measures is prescribed in Article 6-2 of the Police Duties Execution Act, which was amended alongside the Self-Defense Forces Law. Additionally, Article 91-3 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, which was newly established together with Article 81-3 and other provisions of the same Law, stipulates that Article 6-2 of the Police Duties Execution Act applies mutatis mutandis to the execution of duties by JSDF personnel of units ordered to implement critical computing systems protection measures.

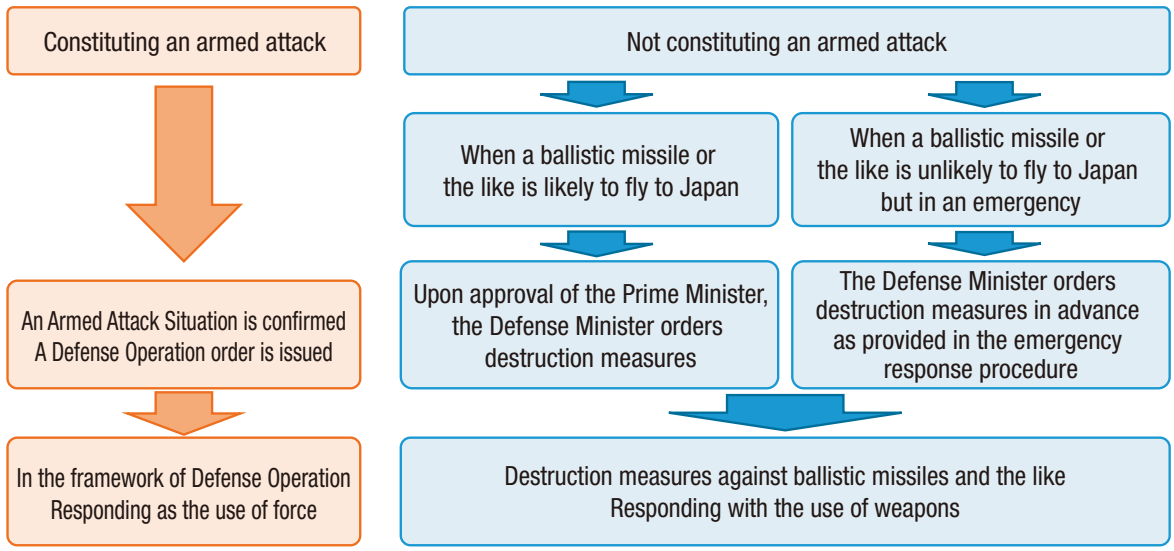
12 When response by the Japan Coast Guard is impossible or extremely difficult

13 Act on Punishment of Acts of Piracy and Measures against Acts of Piracy

(2) In addition to the cases of (1), there may be cases where the situation suddenly changes with little information available on the launch, for example, and the Defense Minister does not have time to obtain approval from the Prime Minister. In preparation for such cases, the Defense Minister may create an emergency response procedure beforehand and obtain approval from the Prime Minister. Following the emergency response procedure, the Defense Minister may order, for a specified period of time, the JSDF units to take measures to destroy ballistic missiles or other objects in the airspace over the Japanese territory or the high seas when such objects are actually flying to the country.

See Fig. II-4-4 (Flow of Response to Ballistic Missiles or Other Objects); Part III, Chapter 1, Section 1-1-3 (Responses to Ballistic Missile Attacks); Fig. III-1-2-4 (Intercepting Part of Future Integrated Air and Missile Defense (Image))

Fig. II-4-4 Flow of Response to Ballistic Missiles or Other Objects



6 Disaster Relief Operations and Others

(1) Disaster Relief Operations

Based on Article 83 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, prefectural governors or other officials[14] may request the Defense Minister, or an officer designated by the Minister,[15] to dispatch JSDF units and organizations in the event of a disaster[16] if they deem such a dispatch necessary in order to protect lives or properties. Upon such a request, the Minister or the designated officer will, in principle, make a judgment based on a comprehensive evaluation of three conditions—urgency, public nature, and non-substitutability—and dispatch the units if it is deemed necessary for the JSDF to respond to the disaster. This procedure is based on the idea that it is best for prefectural governors and other officials to assess the overall disaster situation in the area and decide whether or not to make a request for the JSDF dispatch, taking into consideration the local disaster relief capabilities. However, under circumstances of particular urgency when there is no time to wait for a request, the Defense Minister or the designated officer may discretionarily dispatch units and organizations without waiting for such a request.

In cases where emergency patients need to be transported from the sea, remote islands or elsewhere but both the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) and the local governments have difficulty in dealing with the situation, the JSDF conducts an emergency airlift of such patients under the framework of disaster relief operations.

14 The Commandant of the Japan Coast Guard, the Director General of the Regional Coast Guard Headquarters, and the Director of the Airport Administrative Office may request a disaster relief operation. With regard to disaster relief operation, earthquake disaster prevention dispatch, and nuclear disaster relief dispatch, (1) JSDF personnel who are dispatched may take measures such as evacuation (Article 4 of the Police Duties Execution Act) based on Article 94 of the Self-Defense Forces Law (Authorities in Disaster Relief Operation); (2) The Defense Minister may call up JSDF Reserve and JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel for disaster relief operation and JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel for earthquake disaster prevention dispatch or nuclear disaster relief dispatch.

15 Disasters include not only natural disasters such as storms, torrential rains, tremendous snowfalls, floods, storm surges, earthquakes, and tsunamis, but also human-caused disasters such as fires, maritime accidents, aircraft crashes, and train accidents.

16 The commanding officers of JSDF units across Japan are designated in consideration of convenience for prefectural governors when they make a request.

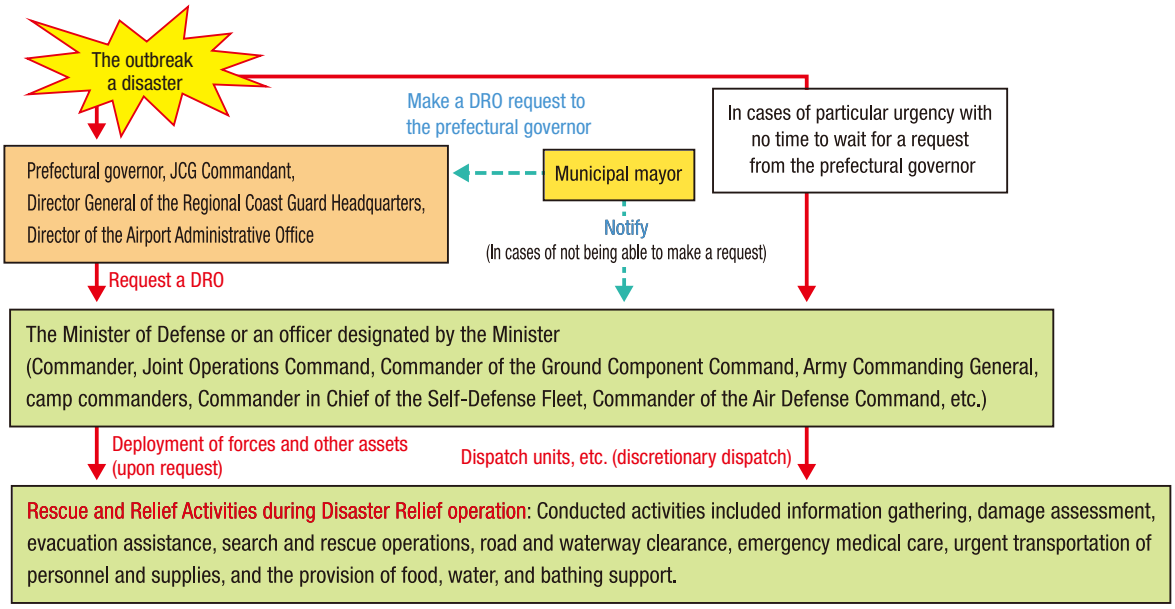
(2) Earthquake Disaster Prevention Dispatch and Nuclear Disaster Relief Dispatch

Based on Article 83-2 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, when a warning declaration[17] is issued based on the Act on Special Measures Concerning Large-Scale Earthquakes, the Defense Minister may dispatch units upon request of the Director of the Seismic Disaster Warning Headquarters (the Prime Minister).

In addition, based on Article 83-3 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, when a declaration of a nuclear emergency situation is issued based on the Act on Special Measures Concerning Nuclear Emergency Preparedness, the Defense Minister may dispatch units upon request of the Director of the Nuclear Disaster Countermeasures Headquarters (the Prime Minister).

See Fig. II-4-5 (Flow of a Disaster Relief Operation); Part III, Chapter 1, Section 3-7 (Response to Large-Scale Disasters, Etc.); Reference 20 (Record of Disaster Relief (Past Five Years))

Fig. II-4-5 Flow of a Disaster Relief Operation



7 Measures against Violation of Territorial Airspace

Under international law, nations have complete and exclusive sovereignty over their territorial airspace. Based on Article 84 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, the Defense Minister may order JSDF units to take the necessary measures to make the intruding aircraft land or withdraw from the territorial airspace of Japan (by guiding intruders away, issuing radio transmission warnings, using weapons, etc.) when an intrusion into Japanese territorial airspace in violation of international law, the Aviation Law, or other domestic laws and regulations. Such countermeasures against airspace violation are conducted as activities to exercise the right of policing intended to maintain public order.

It is a violation of Japanese airspace when objects of foreign countries, even if they are unmanned aircraft (including balloons), intrude into our airspace without permission. The Government of Japan has traditionally considered that the use of weapons during countermeasures against airspace violation is permissible only when such measures fall under the requirements of legitimate self-defense or emergency evacuation, assuming that such intrusions are made by manned and military aircraft. On the other hand, given that the use of weapons against unmanned aircraft that intrude into Japanese airspace would not directly harm people, the Government of Japan clarified its interpretation that in such a case where the safe flight of other aircraft cannot be ensured if the situation is left as it is, and when deemed necessary to use weapons to protect legal interests such as lives and properties of people within Japanese territory as well as the safety of aircraft flying along air routes, such use of weapons

17 The Prime Minister issues an earthquake alert with the endorsement of the Cabinet in the event that an earthquake prediction is reported by the Director-General of the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) and when it is deemed necessary to take emergency earthquake disaster prevention measures urgently.

can be permitted even if such use does not fall under the requirements of legitimate self-defense or emergency evacuation.

See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 1-2-2 (Warnings and Scrambles in Preparation against Airspace Violation)

8 Rescue and Transportation of Japanese Nationals and Others Overseas (R/TJNO)

Based on Article 84-3 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, after obtaining approval from the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister may conduct rescue of Japanese nationals and others overseas (RJNO) by protecting or recovering them upon request from and consultation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs if there is a threat of harm to lives or persons and all of the following are satisfied:

- Competent authorities of the country concerned are currently working on maintaining public safety and order, and no hostilities are confirmed to take place in the areas where rescue measures are taken;
- The country concerned provides consent for the JSDF to take the rescue measures (including the use of weapons);
- Coordination and cooperation with the competent authorities of the country concerned is expected to be ensured to carry out the rescue measures as smoothly and safely as possible in response to anticipated dangers.

In addition, based on Article 84-4 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, the Defense Minister can carry out transportation of Japanese nationals and others (TJNO) in need of life or physical protection to a safe area if requested by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the event of an emergency situation in a foreign country. The Government of Japan has amended Article 84-4 of the Self-Defense Forces Law three times to date. The latest amendment—which was made in 2022 considering experiences including the TJNO from Afghanistan—involved removing restrictions on the means of transportation, reviewing the safety requirements for implementation, and expanding the scope of primary transportation recipients.

See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 3-8 (Responses to Rescue and Transportation of Japanese Nationals Overseas (R/TJNO)); Reference 21 (Transportation of Japanese Nationals Overseas (TJNO) by the Self-Defense Forces); Reference 22 (Record of Transportation of Japanese Nationals Overseas (TJNO))

9 Asset Protection for the U.S. Forces and Other Forces

Based on Article 95-2 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, JSDF personnel are authorized to protect weapons and other equipment[18] of the units of the U.S. Forces and other forces[19] currently engaged in activities that contribute to the defense of Japan in cooperation with the JSDF. The basic principles of this Article, and the involvement of the Cabinet in applying this Article, are set forth in the Implementation Guidelines[20] as outlined below:

(1) Purpose of Article 95-2

Protection under this Article can be applied to weapons and other equipment of the units of the U.S. Forces, other foreign armed forces, and other such organizations currently engaged in activities that contribute to the defense of Japan in cooperation with the JSDF (including bilateral/multilateral exercises but excluding activities carried out in places where hostilities are currently occurring). This Article allows very passive and limited use of weapons to the minimum extent necessary to protect what can be evaluated as important material means which constitute the defense capability of Japan from infringements not amounting to an armed attack.

(2) Activities that Contribute to the Defense of Japan

"Activities that contribute to the defense of Japan" are determined on a case-by-case basis and may include the following: (1) intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) activities including ballistic missile surveillance; (2) transportation and logistics activities in Important Influence Situations; and (3) bilateral/multilateral exercises to enhance capabilities required for defending Japan.

(3) Decision on Protection Missions

When the Defense Minister receives a request from the U.S. Forces, and other forces, the Minister makes a decision on his/her initiative whether the relevant activities fall under "activities that contribute to the defense of Japan" and whether protection is necessary, by considering the objective and details of the activities, capability of the unit, and surrounding circumstances as well as the impacts on the JSDF's regular duties.

(4) Involvement of the Cabinet

Requests from the U.S. Forces and other forces should be deliberated in the National Security Council (NSC) prior to the decision by the Defense Minister in the following cases. However, in urgent cases, the Minister should promptly report to the NSC.

18 Weapons, ammunition, explosives, vessels, aircraft, vehicles, wired telecommunications equipment, wireless telecommunications equipment or liquid fuels.
19 "Other forces" include armed forces of foreign countries and other similar organizations (organizations of foreign countries similar to armed forces such as coast guards are assumed).
20 The Implementation Guidelines for Article 95-2 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, approved by the National Security Council on December 22, 2016

- First request from the U.S. Forces or other forces
- Request for protection in the territory of a third country
- Other requests deemed particularly important

In addition, in case it is recognized that an asset protection is necessary in Important Influence Situation, the Basic Plan which stipulates its necessity should be approved by the Cabinet upon the deliberation in the NSC.

See Part III, Chapter 2, Section 2-4 (Asset Protection for the U.S. Forces and Other Forces); Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-1 (Australia); Reference 13 (Implementation Guidelines for Article 95-2 of the SDF Law); Reference 25 (Track Record of Asset Protection for the U.S Forces and Other Forces (SDF Law Article 95-2))

10 Protection of Computers Used by the JSDF and the U.S. Military in Japan (Effective October 1, 2026)

Based on Article 95-4 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, when a cyberattack is conducted against certain computers used by the JSDF and the U.S. military in Japan, remote access and neutralization measures may be taken against the computers being used in the attack. Given the growing possibility in recent years of cyberattacks against computers used by the JSDF and the U.S. military in Japan, this provision grants JSDF personnel very passive and limited authority to the minimum extent necessary to protect certain computers that are "important material means that constitute Japan's defense capabilities" in cyberspace from infringements that do not amount to an armed attack.

In carrying out remote access and neutralization measures, the Police Duties Execution Act shall apply mutatis mutandis, as is also the case with critical computing systems protection measures.

4 Responses to Important Influence Situations

The Law Concerning Measures to Ensure the Peace and Security of Japan in Important Influence Situations aims to strengthen cooperation with foreign countries to respond to Important Influence Situation by carrying out measures such as logistics support activities and thereby contributing to the peace and security of Japan in the event of such situations. The Law provides the coverage and response measures as follows.

1 Support Target

The armed forces and other services, responding to **Important Influence Situation**, which the JSDF may support, are (1) U.S. Forces engaged in activities contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, (2) armed forces of other foreign countries engaged in activities contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations (UN) and (3) other similar organizations.

KEY WORD **Important Influence Situation**

"Important Influence Situation" refers to a situation that has an important influence on Japan's peace and security including situation that could result in a direct armed attack on Japan if left unattended.

2 Response Measures to Important Influence Situations

The following measures can be taken to respond to Important Influence Situations:

(1) Logistics Support Activities

Provision of goods and services (supply, transportation, repair and maintenance, medical services, communications, airport and seaport services, base services, lodging, storage, use of facilities, and training services), conveniences, and other support measures to the armed forces and other organizations responding to Important Influence Situation.

While the provision of weapons is not allowed, "provision of ammunition" and "refueling and maintenance of aircraft preparing for combat operations" are allowed.

(2) Search and Rescue Activities

(3) Ship Inspection Operations[21] (Those set forth in the Ship Inspection Operations Law)[22]
(4) Other measures necessary to respond to Important Influence Situations

It is possible to implement response measures in foreign territories, but only with the consent of the foreign country concerned.

3 Measures to Avoid Forming an Integrated Part of the Use of Force

The following measures are set forth in order to avoid integration with the use of force by other countries and also to ensure the safety of JSDF personnel:

- Japan does not implement support activities in the areas where hostilities are actually taking place. Regarding search and rescue operations, however, when a victim has already been found and rescue operations have commenced, the JSDF units are allowed to continue search and rescue activities as long as their safety is ensured.
- The commanding officers or others directing activities of the JSDF units, order a temporary suspension of support activities if hostilities occur or are expected to occur at the site of their activities or in its vicinity.
- The Defense Minister designates the area for the activities, and promptly changes the area or orders to suspend the activities if it is deemed difficult to carry out activities smoothly and safely in all or part of the area.

4 Relationship between Important Influence Situation and Survival-Threatening Situation

While both Important Influence Situation and Survival-Threatening Situation are different legal concepts that are determined separately based on the requirements set forth in the respective laws, they share common standards such as the likelihood of Japan being embroiled in a war and the extent of damage to Japanese nationals. Therefore, Survival-Threatening Situation may be conceptually subsumed under Important Influence Situation. Accordingly, depending on how a situation evolves, Important Influence Situation may also satisfy the requirements of Survival-Threatening Situation and be determined as such.

5 Framework for Contributing to the Peace and Stability of the International Community

1 Response to Joint International Peace Response Situations

Under the International Peace Support Act,[23] in order to ensure peace and security of the international community, Japan may cooperate with or support the armed forces of foreign countries engaged in operations for international peace and security in **Joint International Peace Response Situations**. From the perspective of enabling seamless responses to any situation, the International Peace Support Act, enacted as a general law, enables Japan to conduct operations more expeditiously and effectively, making it possible to proactively contribute to international peace and security on Japan's own initiative.

KEY WORD

Joint International Peace Response Situation

A situation that threatens peace and security of the international community where the international community is collectively addressing in accordance with the objectives of the UN Charter to remove the threat and Japan is also expected to contribute proactively as a member of the international community.

(1) Requirements

Either of the following UN resolutions (by the General Assembly or the Security Council) are required for Japan to cooperate with or support the armed forces of other countries.

(i) Resolutions that decide, call upon, recommend or authorize the country of support recipient to respond to situations that threaten the peace and security of the international community

21 Operations to inspect and confirm the cargo and destination of ships (excluding warships and others) and to request, if necessary, a change in sea route, destination port, or destination, for the purpose of strictly enforcing the regulatory measures concerning trade and other economic activities to which Japan is a party, conducted based on UN Security Council resolutions or with the consent of the flag state (the state that has the right to fly its flag as prescribed in Article 91 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea).

22 Law Concerning Ship Inspection Operations in Important Influence Situation and Situation where the International Community is Collectively Addressing Peace and Security

23 Law Concerning Cooperation and Support Activities for Armed Forces of Foreign Countries in Situation where the International Community is Collectively Addressing Peace and Security

(ii) Other than (i), resolutions that acknowledge the situations as a threat to or disruption of peace and call on UN member states to respond to the situations concerned

(2) Response Measures

The following response measures may be implemented in Joint International Peace Response Situations.

(i) Cooperation and Support Activities

Provision of supplies and services to the armed forces of other countries (supply, transportation, repair and maintenance, medical services, communications, airport and seaport services, base services, lodging, storage, use of facilities, training services, and construction)

While the provision of weapons is not allowed, as in the Law Concerning Measures to Ensure the Peace and Security of Japan in Important Influence Situations, the law allows the "provision of ammunition" and "refueling and maintenance of aircraft preparing for combat operations."

(ii) Search and Rescue Activities

(iii) Ship Inspection Operations (Those Set Forth in the Ship Inspection Operations Law)

(3) Measures to Avoid Integration with the Use of Force

The following measures are set forth in order to avoid integration with the use of force by other countries and also to ensure the safety of JSDF personnel:

- Japan does not implement support activities in the areas where hostilities are actually taking place. Regarding search and rescue operations, however, when a victim has already been found and rescue operations have commenced, the JSDF units are allowed to continue search and rescue activities as long as their safety is ensured.
- The commanding officers or others directing activities of the JSDF units, order a temporary suspension of support activities if hostilities occur or are expected to occur at the site of their activities or in its vicinity.
- The Defense Minister designates the area for the activities, and promptly changes the area or orders to suspend the activities if it is deemed difficult to carry out activities smoothly and safely in all or part of the area.

See Reference 14 (Summary Comparison of Laws Concerning International Peace Cooperation Activities)

2 International Peace Cooperation Assignments

The International Peace Cooperation Act[24] is aimed at active contributions by Japan to efforts for international peace led by the UN. The Act serves to set forth a framework for the implementation of International Peace Cooperation Assignments so that Japan can appropriately and promptly make contributions to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKO)[25] and Internationally Coordinated Operations for Peace and Security.[26] The Act also sets forth procedures for taking measures for material cooperation in these activities.

(1) Requirements for Participation

a. UN PKO

The so-called Five Principles as follows for participation in PKO constitute Japan's basic policy for participating in UN PKO.

(i) Agreements on a ceasefire have been reached among the Parties to the armed conflict.

(ii) Consent for the conduct of UN PKO as well as Japan's participation in such operations has been obtained from the countries to which the area where those operations are to be conducted belongs and from the Parties to the armed conflict.

(iii) The operations shall be conducted without partiality to any of the Parties to the armed conflict.

(iv) Should any of the requirements of the above-mentioned principles cease to be satisfied, the International Peace Cooperation Corps dispatched by the Government of Japan may terminate International Peace Cooperation Assignments.

(v) The use of weapons shall be limited to the minimum necessary to protect the lives and persons of personnel. When the consent for acceptance is deemed to be consistently maintained, the use of weapons in defense of the mission mandate is allowed in accordance with specific requirements.

b. Internationally Coordinated Operations for Peace and Security

Japan may participate in Internationally Coordinated Operations for Peace and Security whose nature or details are similar to those of UN PKO, when the Five Principles for participation are met and one of the following exists.

(i) Resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council, or the Economic and Social Council of the UN

(ii) Requests of any of the following international organizations:

24 Act on Cooperation with United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations

25 "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations" refer to operations that are conducted under the governing framework of the UN to respond to conflicts and maintain international peace and security, which are implemented by the UN and two or more participating countries at the request of the Secretary-General of the UN and with the consent of the disputing parties.

26 "Internationally Coordinated Operations for Peace and Security" refers to operations under a framework not overseen by the UN to respond to conflicts and maintain international peace and security, provided that such operations are implemented under the coordination of two or more participating countries and with the consent of the disputing parties.

- The UN
- Organs established by the UN General Assembly or Specialized Agencies of the UN including the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and those specified by a Cabinet Order
- Regional organizations prescribed in Article 52 of the UN Charter or organs established by multilateral treaties including the European Union and those specified by a Cabinet Order, which are acknowledged to have the actual achievements or expertise pertaining to the activities

(iii) At the requests of the countries to which the activities belong (limited to only those cases that are supported by any of the principal organs of the UN prescribed in the Article 7 (1) of the UN Charter).

(2) Description of Major Tasks

- Ceasefire monitoring and humanitarian relief operations for affected people
- Monitoring, stationing, patrols, inspections at checkpoints, and security escorts to ensure the security of specified areas, including prevention and suppression of injury or harm against the life, person, and property of local residents, affected people, and other populations in need of protection (so-called "safety-ensuring" operations)
- Protection of the lives and persons of parties engaged in international peace cooperation operations or providing support for such operations in response to urgent requests when unexpected dangers to the lives and persons of such individuals related to these operations occur or are imminent (so-called "kaketsuke-keigo" (coming to the aid of geographically distant units or personnel under attack) operations)
- Provision of advice or guidance for establishing or reestablishing organizations of the Government related to national defense and other organizations
- Essential work for the organizations undertaking the supervision and coordination of the activities, including planning, coordination, and the collection and organizing of information at the Headquarters Office

(3) Others

a. Dispatch of Uniformed JSDF Personnel to the UN (Dispatch of UN PKO Force Commanders)

JSDF personnel may be dispatched to be engaged in tasks of the UN duties performed by JSDF units or units of other armed forces, upon request of the UN and with the consent of the Prime Minister.[27]

b. Provision of Supplies and Services to Other Armed Forces for Their Operations to Cope with a Large-Scale Disaster

The JSDF can provide the armed forces of a country with which Japan has concluded an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement with supplies or services upon their request when they are located in a same area as the units of the JSDF to undertake operations to cope with large-scale disasters, to the extent it does not interfere with International Peace Cooperation Assignments and other activities of the JSDF.

See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 3-1 (Frameworks for International Peace Cooperation Activities); Reference 14 (Summary Comparison of Laws Concerning International Peace Cooperation Activities); Reference 63 (The JSDF Record in International Peace Cooperation Assignments)

3 International Disaster Relief Activities

The Japan Disaster Relief Team Law (JDR Law)[28] stipulates the measures necessary for dispatching the Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) team to undertake rescue activities and provide medical services in response to large-scale disasters overseas, especially in developing regions.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs may consult the Defense Minister with regard to the operations of JSDF units if there is a special need. The Defense Minister may order JSDF units to carry out rescue and medical activities as well as transportation of personnel and supplies and other activities based on the consultation above.[29]

See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 3-3 (International Disaster Relief Activities); Reference 14 (Summary Comparison of Laws Concerning International Peace Cooperation Activities); Reference 63 (The JSDF Record in International Peace Cooperation Assignments)

27 The dispatch of uniformed JSDF personnel is limited to cases where the consent for UN PKO from the hosting countries and the disputing parties, if any, are expected to be maintained stably throughout the period of dispatch and where circumstances are unlikely to change to cause the suspension of the dispatch.

28 Law Concerning the Dispatch of the JDR team

29 The JDR team is not to be dispatched if the use of weapons is necessary in order to protect the lives and persons of personnel and necessary equipment engaged in international disaster relief activities or related transportation when dangers exist due to the security situation and other factors in the affected country. Therefore, members of the team will not carry weapons within the country concerned for the purpose of protecting the lives and persons of personnel and necessary equipment engaged in international disaster relief activities.

Part III

Three Approaches to Achieve the Defense Objectives

Chapter 1 Japan's Own Architecture for National Defense

Chapter 2 Japan-U.S. Alliance

Chapter 3 Cooperation with Like-Minded Countries and Others

Chapter 4 Initiatives to Live in Harmony with Local Communities and the Environment

Chapter 1

Japan's Own Architecture for National Defense

The National Defense Strategy (NDS) sets forth three defense objectives: to shape a security environment that does not tolerate unilateral changes to the status quo by force; to deter unilateral changes to the status quo by force, or attempts to do so through cooperation and coordination with Japan's ally, like-minded countries, and others; and for Japan to take primary responsibility for responding to an invasion of Japan in the event of an invasion of Japan. To achieve these objectives, the NDS states that all efforts will be made in an integrated manner, outlining three approaches that must be strengthened: (i) Japan's own architecture for national defense, (ii) the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and (iii) collaboration with like-minded countries and others.

Part III explains these three approaches and their specific content for achieving the defense objectives.

Chapter 1, titled "Japan's Own Architecture for National Defense," describes the fundamental reinforcement of defense capabilities and whole-of-government initiatives to reinforce this national defense architecture, including the actions of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) in response to an invasion.

Chapter 2, titled "Japan-U.S. Alliance," describes initiatives related to the Japan-U.S. Alliance, which is the cornerstone of Japan's security policy, to strengthen deterrence and response capabilities of the Alliance.

Chapter 3, titled "Collaboration with Like-Minded Countries and Others," explains initiatives to ensure the peace, stability, and prosperity of the international community as a whole, including those to strategically promote multilateral and multilayered security cooperation, those to ensure maritime security, training and exercises with like-minded countries and others, and initiatives for international peace cooperation activities, arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation.

Chapter 4, titled "Initiatives to Live in Harmony with Local Communities and the Environment," describes measures to promote harmony with local communities, responses to climate change and environmental issues, information provision, public document management, and information disclosure.

See Part II, Chapter 2, Section 2 (Outline of the National Defense Strategy (NDS))

Section 1 Responses to Invasion of Japan

Surrounded by water and possessing an extensive coastline, Japan has numerous remote islands far from the main island, a vast exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and a broad continental shelf. It is a challenge to defend to the end the lives, physical well-being, and property of Japan's people, as well as its territorial land, airspace, and waters, and abundant resources widely distributed in these areas. In addition, as Japan relies on overseas trade for much of its resources and food, it is essential to reinforce the free and open maritime order and ensure the freedom and safety of navigation and flight.

In the event that deterrence fails and an invasion of Japan occurs, Japan will respond swiftly and flexibly according to the nature of the situation, taking primary responsibility for countering the invasion while receiving support from its ally. In such a situation, the Ministry of Defense (MOD)/JSDF will organically integrate operation capabilities across land, sea, and air domains, as well as space, cyberspace, and the electromagnetic spectrum under the centralized command of the JSDF Joint Operations Command (JJOC). By coordinating Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF), Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF), and Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) units to conduct joint operations, they will deter and eliminate any invasion of Japan. In addition, in the event of a large-scale terrorist attack or an attack on critical infrastructure that poses a serious threat to the lives, physical wellbeing, and property of Japanese citizens, Japan will cooperate with related organizations to take effective countermeasures.

The MOD/JSDF must not only respond to any invasion but also consistently demonstrate the resolve and capabilities to address and deter unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force that can affect Japan's peace and security. To this end, the MOD/JSDF continuously conducts information gathering and warning and surveillance activities from peacetime to identify signs of situations at an early stage, and maintains a posture that enables swift and appropriate responses to airspace violations or intrusions into territorial waters by foreign military aircraft, vessels, and the like. In addition, in order to secure the stable use of sea lines of communication which are important to Japan, the MOD/JSDF will implement necessary efforts to conduct counter-piracy operations and ensure the safety of Japan-related vessels in cooperation and collaboration with relevant organizations, like-minded countries, and others.

1 Responses to Invasions of Japan, Large-Scale Terrorism, Etc.

1 Joint Operations of the JSDF

In the event of an invasion of Japan, JSDF units work together through joint operations under the centralized command of the Commander, JSDF Joint Operations Command (C-JJOC).

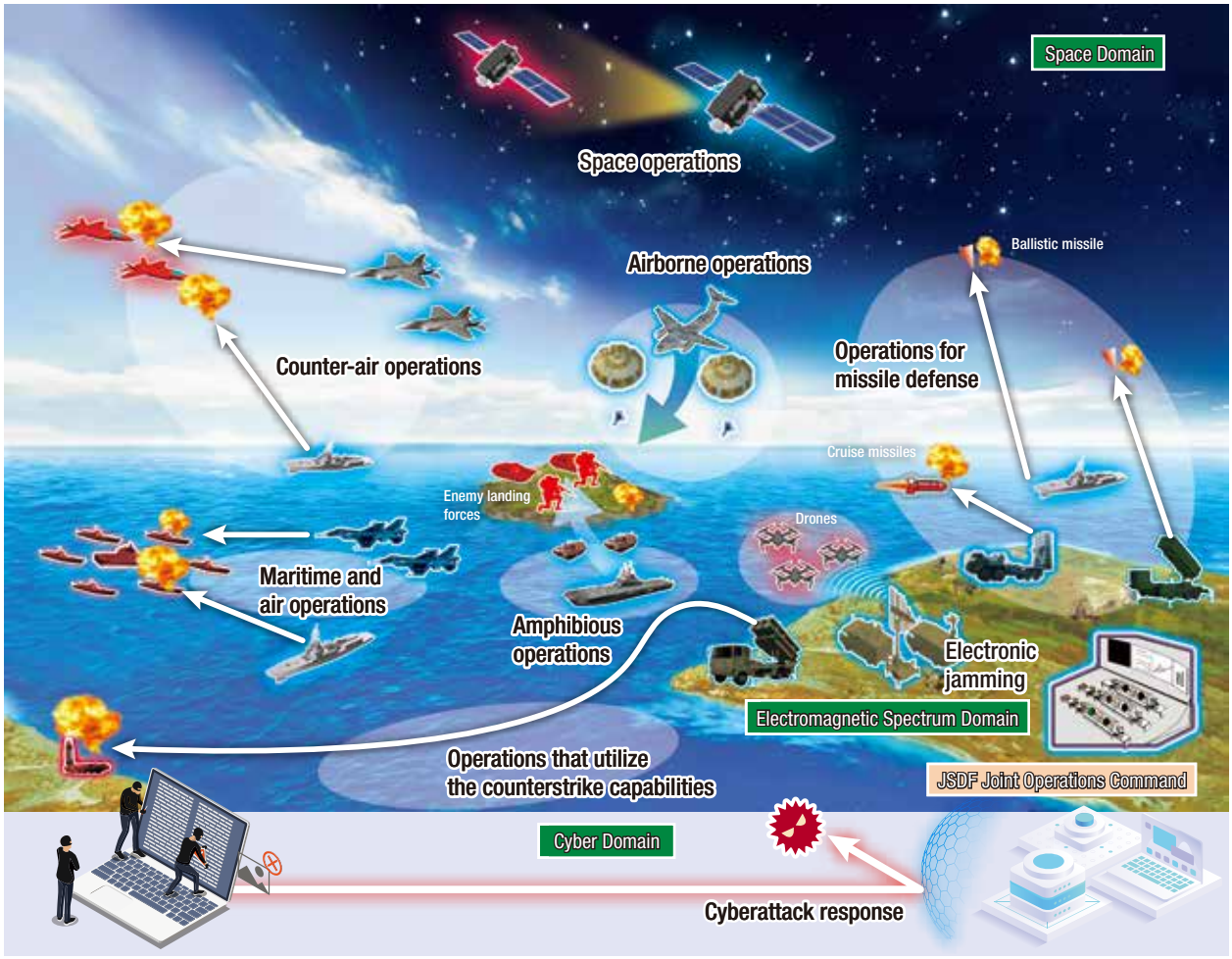
In particular, in modern warfare, it is important to organically integrate operation capabilities in the space, cyberspace, and the electromagnetic spectrum domains in addition to the land, sea, and air domains. It is also necessary to respond swiftly and appropriately to a wide range of situations that are neither peacetime nor contingency, such as gray zone situations, as well as to hybrid warfare.

To that end, in accordance with the Minister's orders on JSDF operations, the C-JJOC is eligible to command centrally major units of Ground, Maritime and Air Self-Defense Forces, as well as units operating in the Space and Cyber domains from peacetime, so that the JSDF will be able to establish a flexible defense posture quickly depending on the situation. The C-JJOC takes control of the overall operations, assigns missions to the necessary subordinate commanders, and allocates the required forces to each commander in order to conduct joint operations quickly and effectively.

Major joint operations include amphibious operations to retake islands, operations utilizing counterstrike capabilities, and missile defense operations. For example, in amphibious operations, the GSDF amphibious units and MSDF transportation units work in coordination to land forces from the sea on remote islands.

See Fig. III-1-1-1 (An Example of Joint Operations by the JSDF (image)); Part II, Chapter 2, Section 2-1 (1) a. (Fundamental Reinforcement of Japan's Defense Capabilities)

Fig. III-1-1-1 An Example of Joint Operations by the JSDF (image)



2 Responses in the Ground, Maritime, and Air Domains

(1) Air Defense Operations

Given Japan's geographical characteristics of being surrounded by the sea and the nature of modern warfare,[1] in the event of a full-scale invasion against Japan, the enemy would first conduct sudden air attacks using aircraft and missiles. For this reason, the JSDF detects such attacks at an early stage using warning and control radars and airborne warning and control systems[2] (AWACS), and intercepts them at a distance using fighter aircraft and surface-to-air missiles in order to prevent harm to Japan's people and territory.

(2) Operations to Defend the Waters Surrounding Japan

If an armed attack is carried out against Japan, aerial attacks are expected to be combined with attacks against our ships and territory by enemy vessels. In response, the JSDF first will cope with invading enemy vessels with stand-off missiles promptly and at places further afield. Based on this, operations to defend the waters surrounding Japan consist of response from the sea, in coastal waters, and in major straits and air defense of coastal waters. The JSDF will disrupt enemy invasions by building up results of these various operations and defeat or cause damage to enemy forces, thereby defending the waters surrounding Japan.

(3) Operations Protecting the Land

It is expected that following or alongside air and maritime invasions, the enemy would conduct land invasions. Forms of invasions may include landings of ground troops from the sea/ocean or drops of airborne forces. In response, the JSDF will block enemy landings by using stand-off missiles, unmanned assets, and other weapons and eliminating enemy forces in coastal waters and landing sites at the earliest possible time. In the event of an actual landing, the JSDF will eliminate the enemy with additional anti-ground attacks by fighter aircraft and firepower from the GSDF.

See Section 2-1 (Strengthening of Stand-off Defense Capabilities), Section 2-3 (Strengthening of Unmanned Defense Capabilities)

(4) Operations to Ensure Security in Maritime Transportation

Japan relies heavily on overseas resources and food, and thus sea lines of communication are life lines of critical importance. In operations to ensure security in maritime transportation, the JSDF will conduct patrols[3] and defend straits and ports.

3 Responses to Ballistic Missile Attacks

(1) Response by the MOD/JSDF

In response to ballistic missile attacks, ballistic missile defense (BMD) is based on a multi-layered defense that combines detection of ballistic missiles by warning and control radars and other means, upper-tier interception using Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) deployed on Aegis destroyers, and lower-tier interception using Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) missiles.[4] The entire sequence of command and control up to interception is carried out through the Japan Aerospace Defense Ground Environment (JADGE).[5]

North Korea has repeatedly launched ballistic missiles and other projectiles. The MOD/JSDF has maintained the necessary readiness to prepare for any situations through the Minister's order to intercept and destroy them,[6] deploying PAC-3 in areas such as Okinawa Prefecture. In the event of a ballistic missile launch, the MOD promptly shares information with the entire Government of Japan and related agencies and collects and analyzes relevant information.

See Part II, Chapter 4, 3-5 (Destruction Measures against Ballistic Missiles or Other Objects)

(2) Cooperation with the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK)

In responding to ballistic missile attacks, it is essential to have peacetime cooperation with the United States, including the U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ). Measures including constant real-

1 Air operations are important elements influencing the results of the entirety of operations. It is vital to obtain air superiority before or at the same time as implementing ground or maritime operations.
2 Aircraft with warning control systems and radar capable of monitoring omnidirectionally. Being excellent in speed performance and boasting long cruising time, the aircraft is able to fly to distant areas to engage in warning for a long time. Moreover, as it is also able to engage in warning at high altitude, it has outstanding flight performance and the warning and surveillance capability, such as a long line-of-sight distance. The ASDF has been operating E-767 aircraft based on civil aircraft B-767.
3 Refers to patrolling a certain specific water in a planned manner for gathering information to prevent surprise attacks by enemy forces, and for other purposes.
4 The PAC-3 is one of the missiles operated by the Patriot surface-to-air guided missile system, and it is primarily a missile intended to intercept ballistic missiles. It should be noted that the term "PAC-3" may refer either to the missile itself or to the Patriot system modified to enable PAC-3 operation.
5 A core system for command and control as well as communication functions. It centrally processes information regarding aircraft captured by radar equipment installed nationwide and provides fighter aircraft with instructions required for scrambling against aircraft intruding into Japanese territorial airspace and air defense combat operations. In addition, it controls PAC-3, radar, etc., in responses to ballistic missiles.
6 In May 2023, the Defense Minister issued an Operation Order for the Self-Defense Forces concerning implementation for destruction measures against ballistic missiles or other objects.

time sharing of BMD operational and relevant information and the expansion of cooperation have been agreed upon at Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (2+2) Meetings.

If a ballistic missile is actually launched, Japan closely cooperates with the United States, including by receiving Shared Early Warning (SEW)[7] information from the U.S. Forces, as well as information collected by transportable BMD radar (TPY-2 radar)[8] and Aegis system-equipped vessel deployed by the USFJ.

In addition, since December 2023, Japan, the United States, and the ROK have been able to continuously share information on ballistic missiles and other projectiles launched by North Korea, through sharing missile warning data in real time.



Launch of an SM-3 from a MSDF destroyer



PAC-3 unit's maneuver and deployment training

4 Responses in the Space Domain

Ensuring various functions using the space domain, such as satellite communications, positioning, and information gathering, is essential for carrying out joint operations. For this reason, the JSDF has assigned the ASDF Space Operations Wing[9] the mission of Space Domain Awareness (SDA), which involves gathering and analyzing space-related information, such as monitoring suspicious satellites and identifying space debris, in collaboration with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and the space forces of Japan's ally and like-minded countries including the United States, thereby conducting activities for the stable utilization of space.

See Section 2-4-1 (Space Domain), Section 3-6 (Efforts Related to the Space Domain), Part I, Chapter 4, Section 3-1 (Trends in Space Domain)



ASDF Space Operations Group performing SDA duties

5 Responses in the Cyber Domain

Cyberspace is one of the critical infrastructures also used for military purposes in areas such as command and control and organization's networks. It is also an important domain for the defense of Japan. Countries, including those in the surrounding region, are believed to be advancing the

7 Information on the area and time of launch, as well as where and when objects are expected to fall, relating to ballistic missiles launched in the direction of Japan. This information is analyzed and conveyed to the JSDF by the U.S. Forces in a short period of time just after the launch (the JSDF started to receive the information in April 1996).

8 The U.S. Forces have deployed part of their missile defense system in Japan. Specifically, a TPY-2 radar (so-called X-band radar) for BMD was deployed at the U.S. Shariki Communication Site (Aomori Prefecture) in 2006. In October 2006, PAC-3 units were deployed in Okinawa Prefecture and in October 2007, a Joint Tactical Ground Station (JTAGS) was deployed in Aomori Prefecture. Furthermore, the 2nd TPY-2 radar was deployed at the U.S. Kyogamisaki Communication Site (Kyoto Prefecture) in December 2014. In October 2018, the 38th Air Defense Artillery Brigade Headquarters was deployed in Sagamihara (Kanagawa Prefecture). In addition, BMD-capable Aegis destroyer of the U.S. Forces were deployed at Commander Fleet Activities, Yokosuka (Kanagawa Prefecture) in October 2015, March 2016 and May 2018.

9 The "Space Operations Group" was reorganized into the "Space Operations Wing" in March 2026.

development of cyberattack capabilities, which are difficult to attribute to specific attackers and can disrupt the target's operations at low cost. For this reason, the JSDF, including the JSDF Cyber Defense Command, monitors the MOD/JSDF's networks 24 hours a day, collects and analyzes information on cyberattacks, and maintains readiness to promptly respond when cyberattacks occur.



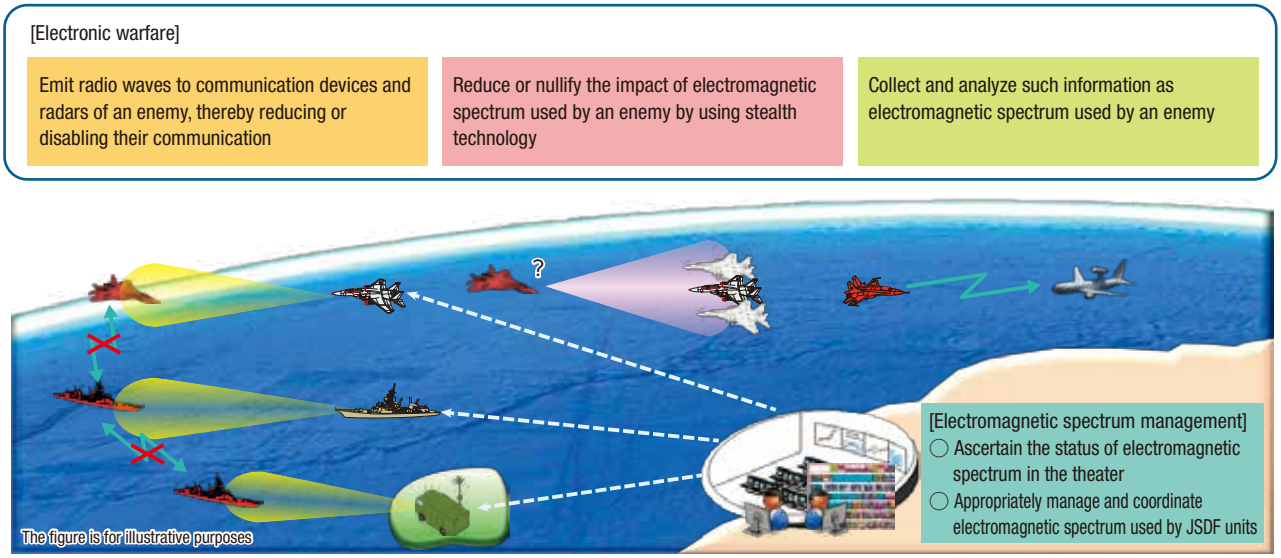
Monitoring of MOD/JSDF networks by cyber-specialized units

6 Responses in the Electromagnetic Spectrum Domain

Electromagnetic spectrum is used for command and communication, warning and surveillance, information gathering, precision guidance of missiles, and other purposes. Because the use of electromagnetic spectrum spans not only the land, sea, and air, but also outer space and cyberspace, in order to gain the advantage in operations across all domains, it is essential to secure superiority in the electromagnetic spectrum domain by strengthening electronic warfare capabilities and properly managing the electromagnetic spectrum. To this end, the JSDF conducts operations such as disrupting enemy use of electromagnetic spectrum and gathering and analyzing information related to electromagnetic spectrum through the use of the Network Electronic Warfare System (NEWS), multi-purpose EP-3 aircraft, and RC-2 signals intelligence aircraft.

See Fig. III-1-1-2 (Electronic Warfare and Electromagnetic Spectrum Management), Part I, Chapter 4, Section 3-3 (Trends in Electromagnetic Domain)

Fig. III-1-1-2 Electronic Warfare and Electromagnetic Spectrum Management



7 Responses to Large-Scale Terrorism and Attacks on Critical Infrastructure

(1) Basic Concept

Japan is highly urbanized and even subversive activities by a small number of people can have a significant impact on the lives of the people and the socio-economic system, through a severe reduction in urban functions. In particular, large-scale terrorist attacks and attacks on critical infrastructure such as nuclear power plants would pose serious threats to the lives, bodies, and property of the Japanese people. These attacks can take various forms, including illegal activities by foreign armed agents[10] and sabotage carried out by guerillas

10 Refers to persons committing illegal acts such as subversive activities in Japan while possessing weapons with significant wounding and killing power.

or special forces.

The MOD/JSDF works in close coordination with relevant organizations such as the police, the Japan Coast Guard (JCG), fire departments, and local governments to respond to large-scale terrorist attacks and attacks on critical infrastructure.

The police assume primary responsibility to respond to these terrorist activities or attacks, with the MOD/JSDF supporting them as needed. If it is difficult for police agencies to respond, the MOD/JSDF will respond through Public Security Operations and other measures. Furthermore, if such terrorist activities or attacks are recognized as armed attacks against Japan, the MOD/JSDF will respond with Defense Operations.

(2) Response to Armed Agents

Cooperation with the police is important in responding to illegal activities by armed agents and similar threats. With regard to Public Security Operations, the JSDF and the police have concluded a basic agreement[11] stipulating cooperation between the JSDF and police as well as local agreements between GSDF divisions/brigades and prefectural police departments.[12] The JSDF closely cooperates with the police to protect facilities and search for armed agents. To this end, the JSDF and police conduct joint training across the country to strengthen cooperation.



Joint training with police at Camp Takeyama in Kanagawa Prefecture (February 2026)

(3) Responses to Attacks by Guerrillas and Special Forces

Typical forms of attacks by guerrillas or special forces include destruction of critical civilian infrastructure and other facilities, attacks against civilians, and assassinations of dignitaries.

To respond to attacks by guerrillas or special forces, the JSDF will endeavor for early detection and recognizing indications through information gathering and surveillance, and protect critical facilities including nuclear power plants. If guerrillas or special forces infiltrate Japanese territory, the JSDF will promptly deploy forces to capture or eliminate them.

(4) Response to CBRNE Weapons

Weapons of mass destruction such as chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) weapons, along with their delivery systems like ballistic missiles and related equipment, pose the danger of their proliferation to terrorists and countries of concern. In Japan, chemical agents were used in the Tokyo subway sarin gas attack in 1995, resulting in the deaths and injuries of many civilians.

If CBRNE weapons are used in Japan and this constitutes an armed attack, the JSDF will conduct Defense Operations to repel the armed attack and rescue victims. In case it does not fall under the category of an armed attack but where police agencies cannot maintain public order, the JSDF will conduct Public Security Operations to suppress armed groups and rescue victims in cooperation with related agencies. Furthermore, even if cases do not lead to Defense Operations or Public Security Operations, the chemical and medical units of the GSDF and other units will cooperate with related agencies in information gathering, decontamination activities, and medical activities through disaster relief operations and civil protection dispatches.

2 Responses to Unilateral Attempts to Change the Status Quo by Force

1 Continuous, Persistent Information Gathering and Surveillance Surrounding Japan

(1) Basic Concept

Japan consists of over 14,000 islands and has a vast maritime area ranking sixth-largest[13] in the world when combining its territorial waters (including inland waters) with its EEZ. The MOD/JSDF is engaged in information gathering and surveillance during peacetime over Japan's territorial waters and airspace, as well as the surrounding sea and airspace, so that it can respond to various contingencies immediately and seamlessly.

11 The Agreement on the Maintenance of Public Order in the Event of Public Security Operations, concluded between the then Defense Agency and the National Public Safety Commission (concluded in 1954 and fully revised in 2000).

12 In 2004, then Defense Agency and the National Police Agency jointly developed the guideline for joint handling of armed agent incidents during Public Security Operations.

13 Japan is the eighth largest in the world if sea areas in overseas territories of various countries are considered as belonging to the countries concerned.

(2) Response by the MOD/JSDF

In Japan's territorial waters and airspace and their surrounding maritime and airspace areas, the MOD/JSDF conducts information gathering and surveillance 24 hours a day in peacetime through MSDF patrol aircraft,[14] ASDF radar sites nationwide, and AWACS. Surveillance activities in major channels are also conducted around the clock by GSDF coastal surveillance units, MSDF guard posts, and other assets.[15] Furthermore, in addition to this information gathering and surveillance posture, the JSDF flexibly operates vessels and aircraft as needed and introduces unmanned assets in steps, maintaining a readiness posture capable of responding promptly to various contingencies.

In recent years, Chinese naval vessels have intensified their activities in the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands, Okinawa Prefecture, and China Coast Guard vessels have repeatedly intruded into Japan's territorial waters.

There have also been cases of Chinese naval vessels navigating within or near Japan's territorial waters, and activities by Chinese aircraft carriers in the waters around Japan are continuing. In June 2025, the JSDF confirmed and published the first activities by one aircraft carrier in the waters to the east of Iwo-To and those by two aircraft carriers in the Pacific Ocean. In addition, in December 2025, activities by a Chinese aircraft carrier that extended from the waters to the east of the main island of Okinawa to the waters to the east of Amami Oshima Island were confirmed for the first time. In November 2025, China commissioned its third aircraft carrier



MSDF patrol aircraft conducting surveillance over the Senkaku Islands

Commentary

Senkaku Islands, Inherent Part of the Territory of Japan

The Senkaku Islands (Ishigaki City, Okinawa Prefecture) are clearly an inherent part of the territory of Japan, both historically and under international law. Japan actually has effective control of the islands. Therefore, there is no territorial issue to be resolved in the first place.

After carefully confirming that there were no signs of any other country's control in 1895, the Japanese government decided to put the Senkaku Islands under the jurisdiction of Okinawa Prefecture by legitimate means under international law at a Cabinet meeting and officially incorporated the islands into the territory of Japan. China began to make its own claims regarding the Senkaku Islands in the 1970s, after a UN agency pointed out possible oil reserves in the East China Sea in 1968. It had not raised any objections until this point. Nor had it given any explanation for not raising any objections.

However, since Chinese government vessels intruded into Japanese territorial waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands for the first time in 2008, such vessels and others have repeatedly intruded into our territorial waters despite our strong protests, which is utterly unacceptable. The activities of Chinese maritime patrol vessels, which are asserting their own claims in our territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands, are a violation of international law in the first place.

Japan strongly urges China to improve its actions in response to such unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force. The MOD and the JSDF will continue to deal with this situation calmly and resolutely, taking all possible measures to monitor the situation in close cooperation with the relevant ministries and agencies, in order to protect the lives and property of the people and the territory, territorial waters, and airspace of Japan.

REFERENCE: Movement of foreign naval vessels in FY2025
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/js/activity/domestic/keikai2025.html

14 Aircraft purposed to patrol for gathering information to prevent surprise attacks by enemy forces, and for other purposes. MSDF possesses P-3C patrol aircraft and P-1 patrol aircraft as fixed-wing patrol aircraft and SH-60J patrol helicopters, SH-60K patrol helicopters and SH-60L patrol helicopters as rotary-wing patrol aircraft.

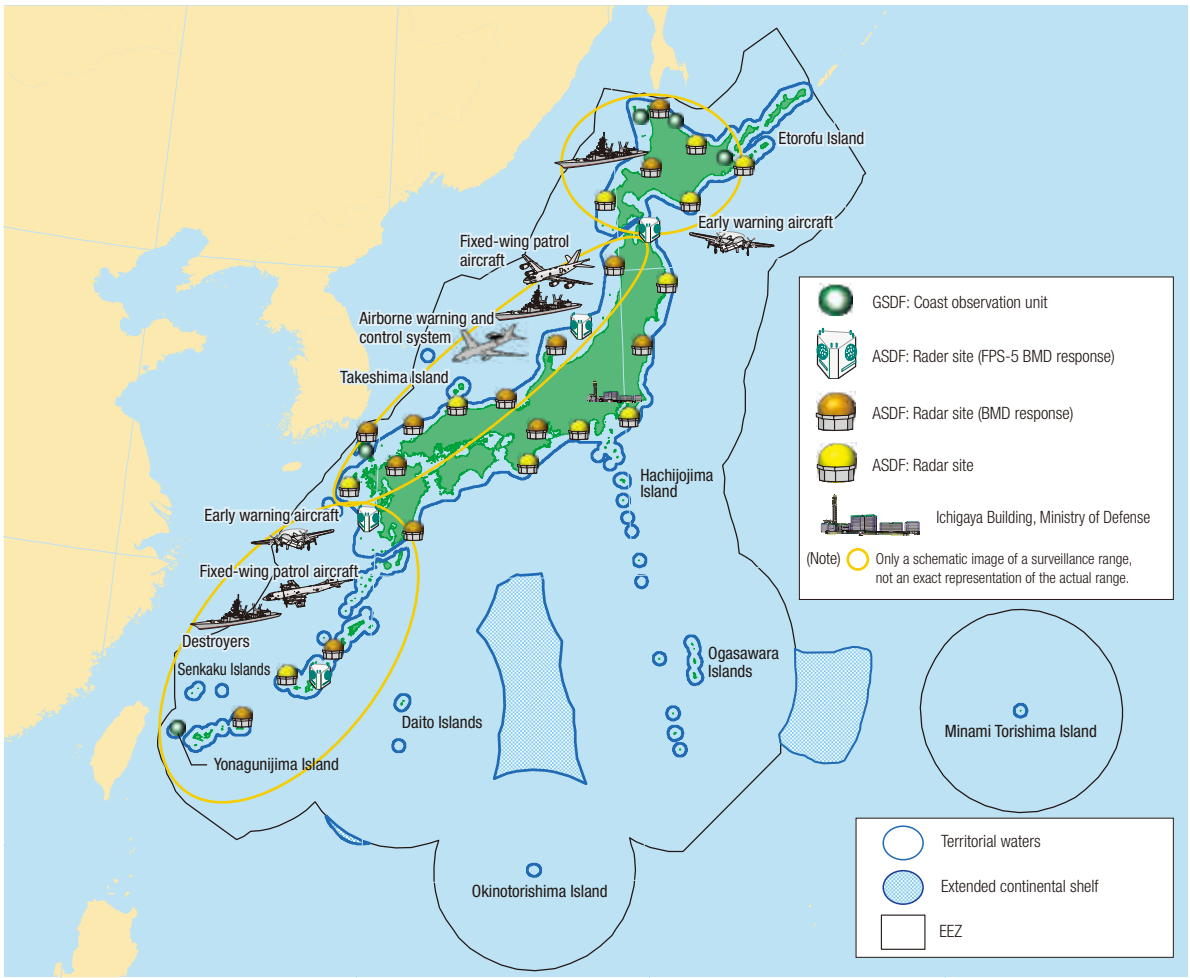
15 Article 4(1)18 of the Act for Establishment of the MOD (Investigation and research required for the performance of duties within jurisdiction) provides the legal basis for warning and surveillance activities by the JSDF.

"Fujian," thereby steadily developing operational capabilities in distant waters and airspace.

The MOD/JSDF also shares the information obtained through such warning and surveillance with related ministries and agencies, including the JCG.

See Fig. III-1-1-3 (Monitoring and Surveillance of the Waters and Airspace Surrounding Japan (Conceptual Image)), Section 3-5 (Continuous, Persistent Information Gathering and Surveillance from Peacetime), Reference 15 (Number of Days and Total Incursions into the Territorial Waters Around the Senkaku Islands by Ships Belonging to the China Coast Guard Bureau, etc.)

Fig. III-1-1-3 Monitoring and Surveillance of the Waters and Airspace Surrounding Japan (Conceptual Image)



2 Warnings and Scrambles in Preparation against Airspace Violation

See Part II, Chapter 4, Section 3-7 (Measures against Intrusion of Territorial Airspace)

(1) Basic Concept

Under international law, states have complete and exclusive sovereignty over their territorial airspace. In Japan, the ASDF holds primary responsibility for carrying out countermeasures against airspace violations, in accordance with the provisions of the Self-Defense Forces Law.

(2) Response by the MOD/JSDF

The ASDF detects and identifies aircraft flying in airspace surrounding Japan,using warning and control radars as well as AWACS. If any suspicious aircraft heading to Japanese territorial airspace are detected, fighters and other aircraft scramble to approach them to confirm the situation and monitor the aircraft as necessary. Furthermore, in the event that such suspicious aircraft have actually intruded into Japanese

territorial airspace, the ASDF issues a radio transmission or other warning make the aircraft to leave the airspace.

The total number of scrambles conducted by ASDF fighters in FY2025 was 595 (366 times for Chinese aircraft, 214 times for Russian aircraft, and 15 times for others)).

Flight patterns of Chinese military aircraft in recent years have diversified, and now their range of activities is extending to not only the airspace over the East China Sea, but also the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan.

In addition, joint long-range flights by Chinese and Russian bombers and other aircraft have been conducted around Japan a total of nine times since 2019. In December 2025, Chinese and Russian bombers flew from the East China Sea through the airspace between the main island of Okinawa and Miyakojima Island, and conducted a long-distance flight over the Pacific Ocean reaching the waters off Shikoku. This marked the first time that Chinese and Russian bombers had jointly advanced as far as the waters off Shikoku.

As Chinese and Russian aircraft continue their active operations in the vicinity of Japan, the MOD/JSDF closely monitors their movements and takes all necessary measures to ensure thorough countermeasures against airspace violation.



Engaging in a scramble response

(3) Violations of Japanese Territorial Airspace by Chinese and Russian Aircraft

In August 2024, one Chinese military Y-9 intelligence-gathering aircraft violated Japanese territorial airspace over the waters off the Danjo-gunto Islands (Nagasaki Prefecture). In the following month, one Russian military IL-38 patrol aircraft violated Japanese territorial airspace north of Rebun Island (Hokkaido) three times. The ASDF scrambled fighters to respond and used flares for the warning for the first time in countermeasures against airspace violation.

Furthermore, in May 2025, a China Coast Guard helicopter, which took off from a China Coast Guard vessel that had intruded into Japanese territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands, violated Japan's territorial airspace. JCG vessels issued warnings directing the helicopter to leave the airspace, while the ASDF scrambled fighters in response. This was the first case where a Chinese helicopter violated Japan's territorial airspace.

Such airspace violations not only constitute a serious infringement of Japan's sovereignty but also pose a threat to the safety of its people and are utterly unacceptable. The Government of Japan lodged strong protests with the Chinese and Russian governments and firmly demanded the prevention of any recurrence.

See Fig. III-1-1-4 (Number and Breakdown of Scrambles since the Cold War), Fig. III-1-1-5 (Example Flight Patterns of Russian and Chinese Aircraft to Which Scrambles Responded (FY2025)), Fig. III-1-1-6 (Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) of Japan and Those of Neighboring Countries/Regions (image)), Part I, Chapter 3, Section 2-2-6 (2) (Military Activities in Japan's Surrounding Waters And Airspace), Part I, Chapter 3, Section 3-3-1 (Relations with China)

MOVIE: UNIT-1 Aircraft warning and control
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKd7UEU73rM

REFERENCE: Aircraft scrambles in FY2025
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/js/activity/domestic/Scramble2025.html

Fig. III-1-1-4 Number and Breakdown of Scrambles since the Cold War

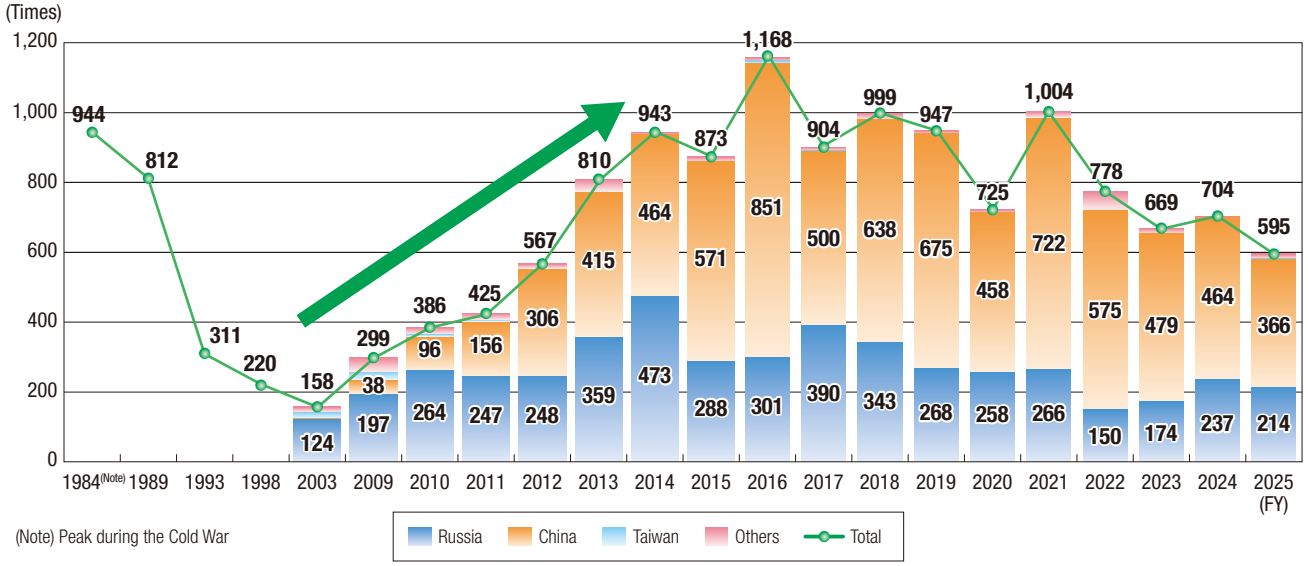


Fig. III-1-1-5 Example Flight Patterns of Russian and Chinese Aircraft to Which Scrambles Responded (FY2025)

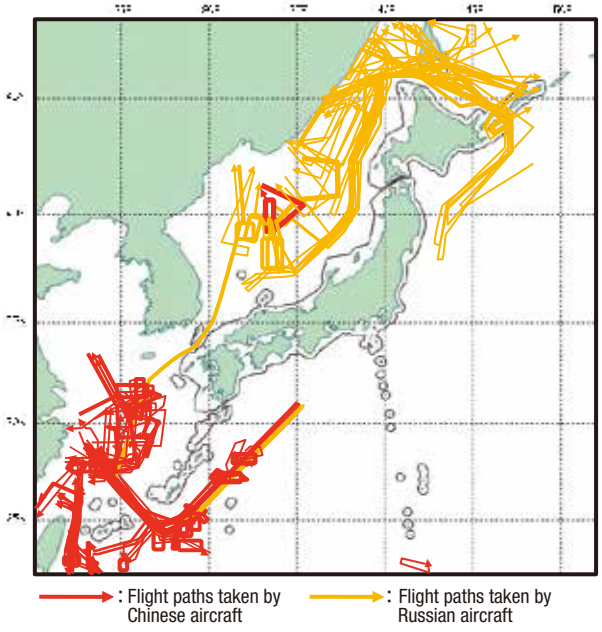
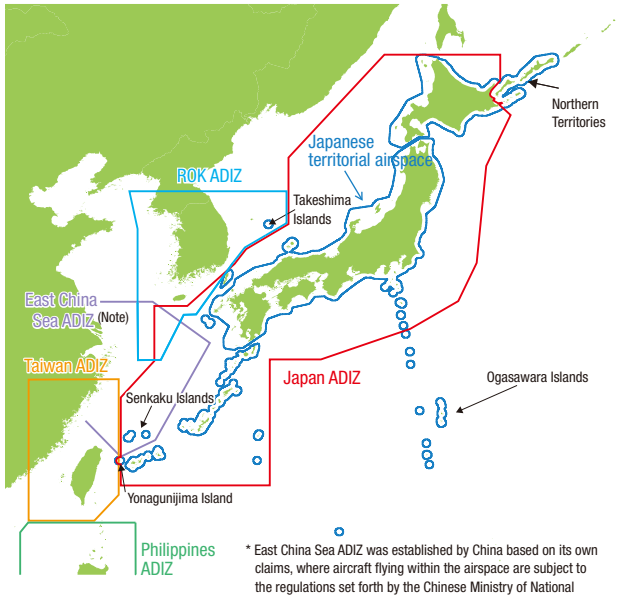


Fig. III-1-1-6 Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) of Japan and Those of Neighboring Countries/Regions (image)



* East China Sea ADIZ was established by China based on its own claims, where aircraft flying within the airspace are subject to the regulations set forth by the Chinese Ministry of National Defense, and in case of non-compliance, the Chinese military will take emergency defensive measures, which inappropriately infringes on the fundamental principle of freedom of flight over international waters stipulated in international law.

(4) Unusually Close Approach of Chinese Military Aircraft to JSDF Aircraft

There have been cases of unusually close approach and radar illumination by Chinese military aircraft against JSDF aircraft.

In June 2025, an on-board fighter of the Chinese military aircraft carrier "Shandong" chased an MSDF patrol aircraft, which was conducting warning and surveillance activities in airspace over international waters in the Pacific Ocean, and approached to within approximately 45 meters horizontally with no vertical separation and crossed in front of the MSDF plane at a distance of approximately 900 meters. In the following month, Chinese fighter-bombers made an unusually close approach to an ASDF intelligence gathering aircraft in airspace over high seas of the East China Sea. These incidents could have triggered an accidental collision, and the MOD/JSDF is deeply concerned that Chinese military aircraft

have repeatedly conducted such flights in rapid succession.

Moreover, in December 2025, a fighter aircraft which took off from the Chinese aircraft carrier "Liaoning" intermittently illuminated ASDF fighter aircraft with its radar for approximately 30 minutes over the high seas southeast of the main island of Okinawa. This occurred while the ASDF fighter aircraft were appropriately carrying out countermeasures against airspace violations in response to Chinese aircraft launched from the carrier, and constitutes a dangerous act. In response, Defense Minister Koizumi briefed Australia, Italy, New Zealand, and other countries on the radar illumination incident by Chinese military aircraft against JSDF aircraft in December and the joint flight by Chinese and Russian bombers in the same month, and shared grave concerns over these incidents.

3 Responses to Submarines Navigating Underwater in Japanese Territorial Waters

(1) Basic Concept

The Defense Minister will issue an order for Maritime Security Operations to deal with foreign submarines submerging in Japanese territorial waters.[16] Such submarines will be required to navigate on the surface and show their flags[17] in accordance with international law. If they do not comply, they will be required to leave Japanese territorial waters.

(2) Response by the MOD/JSDF

The MSDF conducts warning and surveillance of the waters surrounding Japan using patrol aircraft and vessels. When there is detection of submerged navigation by a foreign submarine within Japan's territorial waters, it works to identify and track the submarine. It strives to maintain and enhance its capabilities to demonstrate its intent not to permit submerged navigation in violation of international law, as well as to respond even in shallow-water maritime areas.

In 2004, the MSDF observed a submerged Chinese nuclear-powered submarine navigating under Japanese territorial waters around the Sakishima Islands (Okinawa Prefecture). In response to this incident, the MSDF issued an order for Maritime Security Operations and continued to track the submarine with MSDF vessels until it entered the high seas.[18] The MOD/JSDF will continue to maintain a warning and surveillance posture and enhance response capabilities in order to address submerged navigation by foreign submarines within Japan's territorial waters.

4 Response to Armed Special Operations Vessels

(1) Basic Concept

The JCG is primarily responsible for responding to suspicious armed special operations vessels (unidentified vessels). When it is extremely difficult or impossible for the JCG to respond to a situation, the Defense Minister will issue an order for Maritime Security Operations and the JSDF will deal with it in cooperation with the JCG.

(2) Response by the MOD/JSDF

In light of the lessons learned from the cases of an unidentified vessel off the Noto Peninsula (Ishikawa Prefecture) in 1999, an unidentified vessel in the sea southwest of Kyushu in 2001 and other similar incidents, the MOD/JSDF has been making various efforts. In particular, the MSDF has taken steps such as establishment of the MSDF Special Boarding Unit[19] and equipment of destroyers with machine guns. In addition, based on "the manual for jointly dealing with suspicious vessels" formulated by the then Defense Agency and the JCG in 1999, the MSDF has regularly conducted joint training with the JCG to strengthen coordination.

5 Responses to Integrated Information Warfare with Special Regard to the Cognitive Dimension

(1) Basic Concept

In recent years, concerns have been growing within the international community about information warfare that influences people's perceptions and affects public opinion and governmental decision-making. This includes dissemination of disinformation and the spread of information aimed at eroding trust in government and dividing society. Countries that engage in information warfare, such as Russia and China, are believed to be aiming at shaping a favorable security environment for themselves by disseminating information advantageous to their own interests. Japan is working to strengthen its capabilities to respond to integrated information warfare, with special regard to the cognitive dimension, such as the spread of disinformation.

(2) Response by the MOD/JSDF

The MOD/JSDF will build a more desirable security environment while preventing influence on Japan's decision-

16 The term "territorial waters" also includes inland waters.

17 Article 20 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea states, "In the territorial sea, submarines and other underwater vehicles are required to navigate on the surface and to show their flag."

18 In addition, in 2018, underwater navigation by a Chinese submarine was confirmed for the first time through Japan's contiguous zone in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands. Furthermore, in 2021, a submarine presumed to be Chinese was confirmed to be navigating underwater through the Japanese contiguous zone in the vicinity of Amami Oshima Island (Kagoshima Prefecture), and warning and surveillance were carried out by MSDF destroyers and patrol aircraft.

19 A specialized unit (established in March 2001) deployed under Maritime Security Operations to disarm unidentified vessels when conducting on-board inspections.

making by addressing integrated information warfare with special regard to the cognitive dimension from peacetime through the following means: (i) acquiring diverse information collection capabilities by strengthening intelligence functions, (ii) determining the veracity and intentions of all threats, including disinformation spread by other countries, and neutralizing them or taking other measures through various means, and (iii) disseminating rapidly and strategically appropriate information at every opportunity in cooperation with our ally, like-minded countries, and others.

Furthermore, Japan will not implement efforts that damage our credibility (such as dissemination of disinformation via social media and other means, manipulation of public opinion, conspiracy, etc.).

Within the MOD/JSDF, the Defense Intelligence Headquarters plays a central role in responding to information warfare. It continuously gathers and analyzes a wide range of information, determines the authenticity of that information, and disseminates appropriate information, among other necessary measures.

6 Responses to Ship-to-Ship Transfers

(1) Basic Concept

Pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 2375, UN member states are prohibited from engaging in ship-to-ship transfers of goods at sea involving North Korean vessels. This is intended to prevent North Korea from smuggling to evade sanctions imposed based on the UN Security Council resolution.

Japan is committed to ensuring the effectiveness of the UN Security Council resolution by responding to ship-to-ship transfers in close cooperation not only with the United States and ROK but also with the international community, toward the realization of North Korea's dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

(2) Response by the MOD/JSDF

The MOD/JSDF has the MSDF gather information on vessels suspected of violating the UN Security Council resolution, and cooperates closely with relevant ministries and agencies, countries, and international organizations. As a result, during the period from 2018 onward to the end of March 2026, there has been confirmation of 24 cases of seaborne rendezvous between North Korean-flagged tankers and foreign-flagged tankers, etc. on the high seas of the East China Sea. Given the strong suspicions that these vessels engaged in ship-to-ship transfers, Japan shared the information with relevant countries and made public announcements on the subject.

In recent years, there has been growing international concern about these illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean vessels. Since April 2018, the United States and the ROK, as well as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy, have dispatched naval vessels and aircraft in the waters surrounding Japan to conduct monitoring and surveillance activities. The MOD/JSDF will continue close cooperation with relevant countries to ensure the effectiveness of the UN Security Council resolution.

7 Efforts to Ensure the Stable Use of sea lines of communication

(1) Counter-Piracy Operations

a. Significance of Counter-Piracy Operations and Efforts by the International Community

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

Japan's primary response to piracy is by the JCG, which is a law enforcement agency, and the JSDF when the JCG is unable or finds it extremely difficult to cope with.

In this regard, with respect to acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, JSDF units have been dispatched to carry out counter-piracy operations due to the difficulty for the JCG to respond.

For the international community, including Japan, these waters are extremely important sea lines of communication connecting Europe and the Middle East with East Asia. However, there were a high number of piracy incidents by pirates armed with machine guns and rocket launchers with purposes such as receiving ransoms by detaining hostages. In response, a series of UN Security Council resolutions adopted from 2008 onward called for action by countries, particularly dispatching warships and military aircraft to deter piracy in these waters, about 30 countries including Japan and the United States have dispatched their warships and other assets to the waters.

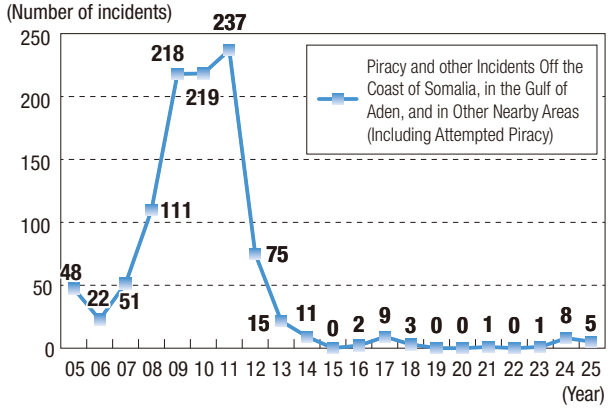
As an international counter-piracy initiative, Japan is working with the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF151) and European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) responsible for counter-piracy measures to deter piracy outside the territorial waters of the coastal states in the area of operation.

Compared to the peak period, the number of piracy incidents off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden has remained low as a result of these initiatives by the international community. However, eight incidents occurred in 2024 and five in 2025 (including hijackings). In addition, the fundamental issues in Somalia, such as poverty, which are the cause of piracy, have not yet been resolved, and the threat of piracy still exists and remains unpredictable. Moreover, Somalia's own capability to control piracy remains insufficient. Therefore, Japan must continue to make all efforts to ensure the safety of navigation in an extremely important sea lines of communication and continue to

steadily carry out counter-piracy operations in cooperation with the international community, including the forces of other countries, in order to contribute to the peace and stability of the international community.

See Fig. III-1-1-7 (Piracy and Other Incidents Off the Coast of Somalia, in the Gulf of Aden and in Other Nearby Areas (Including Attempted Piracy)), Part II, Chapter 4, Section 3-4 (Counter-Piracy Operations)

Fig. III-1-1-7 Piracy and Other Incidents Off the Coast of Somalia, in the Gulf of Aden and in Other Nearby Areas (Including Attempted Piracy)



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

b. Japan's Initiatives

In 2009, an order for Maritime Security Operations was issued to protect Japan-related vessels from acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, and destroyers[20] and P-3C patrol aircraft[21] were dispatched to begin direct escort and other activities. Further, Japan subsequently enacted the Counter-Piracy Measures Act[22] in the same year. This act allows the JSDF to protect the vessels of all nations from acts of piracy, and to use weapons to a reasonable extent if no other means are available to stop vessels engaged in piracy, such as approaching private vessels.

The MOD/JSDF dispatches the Deployment Surface Force for Counter Piracy Enforcement (DSPE), Deployment Air Force for Counter Piracy Enforcement (DAPE), and Deployment Support Group for Counter Piracy Enforcement (DGPE) as counter-piracy units.

The DSPE strives to ensure the safety of ships navigating in the area by using destroyers in two different manners: direct escort of private vessels across the Gulf of Aden, and zone defense in areas allocated according to the situation in the Gulf of Aden. There are JCG officers aboard the destroyers.[23]

The DAPE conducts warning and surveillance using P-3C patrol aircraft within the flight zone determined in coordination with CTF151 Headquarters. When a suspicious vessel is identified, information is provided to MSDF destroyers, naval vessels from other countries, and private vessels. If requested, immediate measures are taken to confirm the safety of the surrounding area. In addition, the information gathered by the MSDF P-3C is constantly shared with other related organizations and contributes significantly to deterring acts of piracy and disarming vessels suspected of being pirate ships.

To improve the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the DAPE, the DGPE carries out security, maintenance, and management of the operation facility in the Republic of Djibouti, located in the northwest district of Djibouti International Airport.

In addition, in order to support these units, the Airlift Squadron and other units are organized as needed to operate ASDF transport aircraft to carry out air transport of materials.

The National Security Strategy (NSS) and other documents state that the operation facility in Djibouti will be utilized for the rescue and transportation of Japanese nationals and others overseas (R/TJNO), while obtaining the understanding of the Djibouti government. In 2023, the Cabinet of Japan approved the "Government Initiative to Ensure the Safety of Japanese Nationals and Others Overseas in the Middle East and Africa" and added a new mission for the counter-piracy unit to maintain a temporary posture for possible R/TJNO, including accumulating and managing equipment.

See Section 3-8 (Responses to Rescue and Transportation of Japanese Nationals Overseas (R/TJNO)), Part II, Chapter 4, 3-4 (Counter-Piracy Operations), Reference 12 (Conditions Required for Main Operations of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (Including Diet Approval) and Authority for the Use of Weapons Concerning Main Operations of the Japan Self-Defense Forces)

c. Achievements and Appreciation for Japan's Initiatives

To strengthen coordination with the units of other countries engaged in counter-piracy operations and enhance the effectiveness of the JSDF's counter-piracy operations, the MOD/JSDF has dispatched JSDF personnel to the CTF151

REFERENCE: Japan's Initiatives to Ensure the Effectiveness of the UN Security Council Resolution
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/defense/sedori/index.html

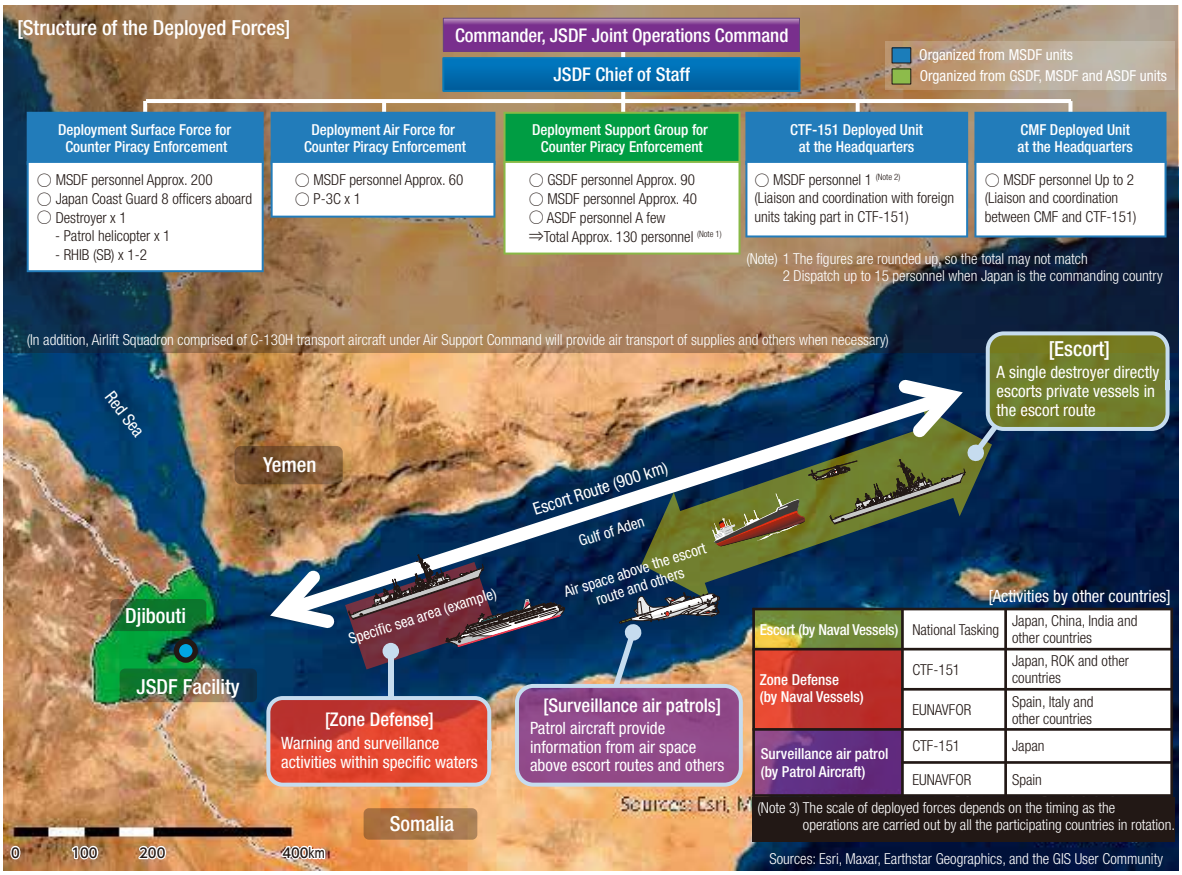
20 The number of destroyers was changed from two to one from December 2016.
21 The number of aircraft was changed from two to one from December 2023.
22 Act on Punishment of Acts of Piracy and Measures against Acts of Piracy
23 Eight JCG officers are aboard the MSDF destroyer and conducting judicial law enforcement activities, including arresting and interrogating pirates, as required.

and Combined Maritime Force (CMF) headquarters since 2014. Among these, the JSDF dispatched commanders to CTF151 on four times: in 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2020.

As of March 31, 2026, the number of vessels escorted by the DSPE stood at 4,076 (including 121 vessels escorted as part of Maritime Security Operations). As of the same day, the DAPE has flown 3,549 times, totaling approximately 25,240 flight hours, and provided information 16,657 times to ships and other countries engaged in counter-piracy operations.

The counter-piracy operations by the JSDF have been highly praised by the international community. For example, national leaders and others have expressed their gratitude. Moreover, the MSDF destroyers, which are engaging in counter-piracy operations on the front line, have 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 navigate with peace of mind and asking them to continue escorting ships there. Additionally, the Japanese Shipowners' Association and other groups have expressed appreciation for protection of Japan-related vessels and continuously asked that all efforts be continued against piracy.

Fig. III-1-1-8 Structure of the Deployed Forces/JSDF's Counter-Piracy Operations (image)



REFERENCE: Counter-piracy efforts
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/js/activity/overseas.html

MOVIE: Defending the sea from pirates
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-VlPG_jsMc

MOVIE: Counter-piracy operations in the waters off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GvdTkufJwU&feature=youtu.be

The MOD/JSDF continues to closely cooperate with the international community, including foreign forces, to ensure the stable use of sea lines of communication by steadily carrying out counter-piracy operations.

See Fig. III-1-1-8 (Structure of the Deployed Forces/ JSDF's Counter-Piracy Operations (image))

(2) Information Gathering Activities for Ensuring the Safety of Japan-related Vessels in the Middle East

a. Background of the Deployment of the JSDF to the Middle East

Peace and stability in the Middle East are crucial to the peace and prosperity of the international community, including Japan. In addition, for Japan as well, it is very important to ensure the safety of Japan-related vessels in the Middle East, one of the world's major energy sources, on which Japan depends for about 90% of its crude oil imports.

In the Middle East, amidst rising tensions, there were incidents of attacks on ships. In 2019, Japan-related vessels suffered damage in the Gulf of Oman. Under these circumstances, the United States, European countries, and other countries are taking steps to ensure the safety of navigation in the Middle East by utilizing ships and aircraft.

In light of this, in 2019, the Cabinet approved the "Government's Efforts to Ensure the Safety of Japan-related Vessels in the Middle East." In this context, as Japan's own initiatives, the following whole-of-government comprehensive measures are being taken: (i) further diplomatic efforts to ease tensions in the Middle East and stabilize the situation; (ii) thorough implementation of navigation safety measures, including close information sharing with relevant industries; and (iii) utilization of the JSDF's vessels and aircraft to strengthen the information gathering posture necessary to ensure the safety of Japan-related vessels.

b. Activities by the MOD/JSDF

The information gathering activities conducted by the MOD/JSDF are currently carried out by destroyers and P-3C patrol aircraft from the counter-piracy unit in the high seas of three areas of water: the Gulf of Oman, the northern Arabian Sea, and the Gulf of Aden to the east of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait (including the EEZ of the coastal states).

These information gathering activities are part of the Government's maritime navigation safety measures and are intended to gather information necessary to ensure the safety of Japan-related vessels. They also serve to support decision-making on whether to issue Maritime Security Operations Order in response to unexpected circumstances or other changes in situations, and to facilitate the smooth execution of such orders if issued.[24] Specifically, the activities include confirming the type, nationality, location, course, and speed of vessels navigating the operational maritime areas, and gathering information that directly affects the safety of vessel navigation, such as the presence of suspicious vessels or signs of unexpected circumstances, as well as other necessary information.

Information gathered by the MOD/JSDF is shared with the Cabinet Secretariat, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and other relevant ministries and agencies, as well as with relevant industries through public-private liaison meetings, to be used for the Government's navigation safety measures.

With regard to the posture of these information gathering activities, currently, one destroyer and one P-3C patrol aircraft are concurrently conducting both counter-piracy operations and these information gathering activities.

Regarding the achievements of these information gathering activities, as of March 31, 2026, the total numbers of vessels confirmed by the DSPE and DAPE are 97,750 and 94,711, respectively.

In the Middle East, high tensions persist and, based on the fact that each country is continuing its own activities, including the Maritime Security Initiative by the United States and other countries, since 2020, the Japanese Government has been extending the JSDF's activity period by about one year every year.

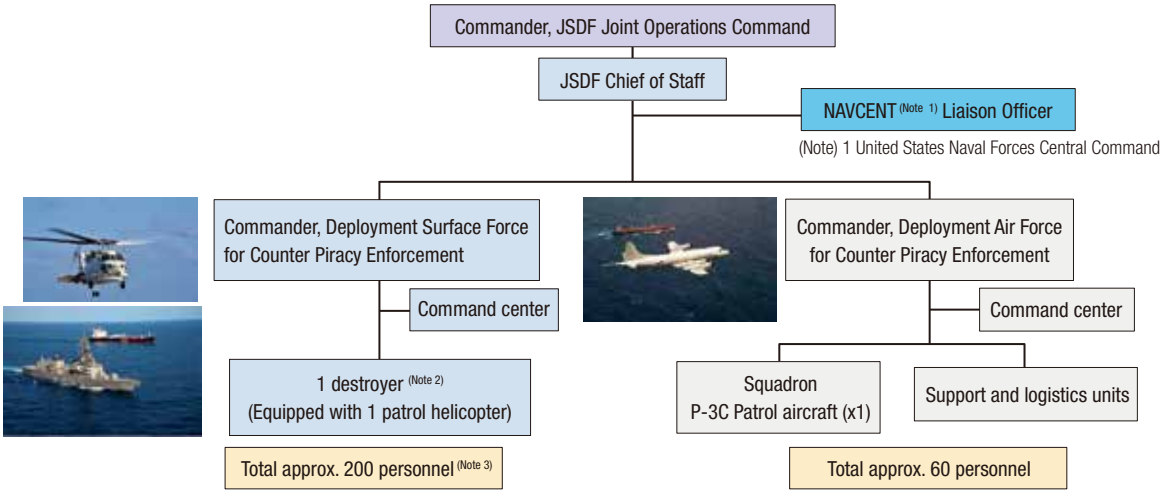
In light of the need to ensure the safety of navigation for Japan-related vessels, if it is deemed before the expiration of the period that activities by the JSDF are no longer necessary, then, in addition to concluding these activities at that point, the National Security Council will consider how to respond if there is a significant change in the situation.

See Fig. III-1-1-9 (Units Engaged in Information Gathering Activities in the Middle East), Fig. III-1-1-10 (Information Gathering Activities by the JSDF (image)), Part I, Chapter 3, Section 11-2-2 (1) (Maritime Security in the Middle East), Reference 16 (Government's Efforts to Ensure the Safety of Japan-Related Vessels in the Middle East)

REFERENCE: The Government's efforts to ensure the safety of Japan-related vessels in the Middle East
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/defense/m_east/index.html

24 These information gathering activities are conducted based on the provisions of Article 4(1)18 of the Act for Establishment of the MOD (Investigation and research required for the performance of duties within jurisdiction).

Fig. III-1-1-9 Units Engaged in Information Gathering Activities in the Middle East



(Note) 2 Utilize vessels of Deployment Surface Force for Counter Piracy Enforcement (DSPE).
3 Including command center officers; The number of personnel may vary depending on ships dispatched.

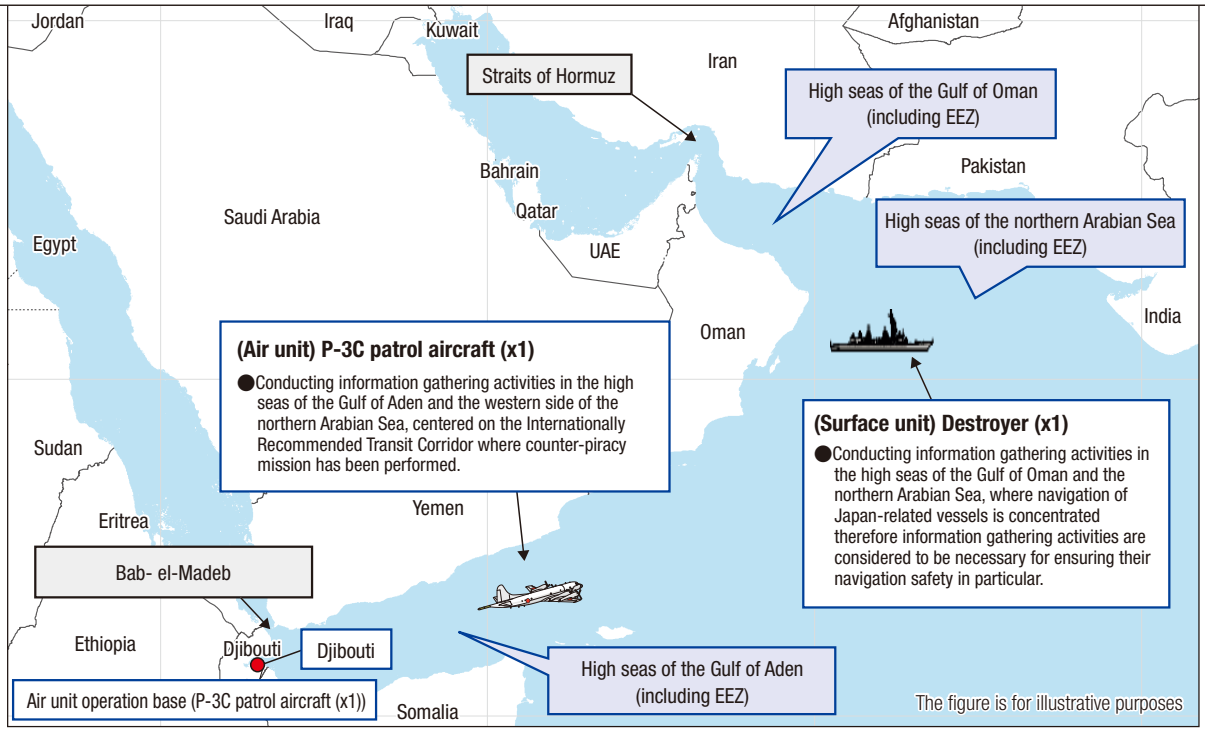
c. Cooperation with Related Countries

As a result of a comprehensive review of effective responses to ensure the safe navigation of Japan-related vessels in the Middle East, and in light of the need to ensure a stable supply of crude oil, relations with the United States, and relations with Iran, Japan implements its own independent initiatives without participating in the Maritime Security Initiative led by the United States. On the other hand, Japan closely cooperates with its ally, the United States. One MSDF officer has been dispatched as a liaison officer to the U.S. Central Naval Command to facilitate information sharing.

It is important to gain the understanding of the coastal states, including Iran, regarding the information gathering activities that Japan is undertaking as an independent initiative, and Japan has been explaining these activities to them with transparency. In addition, the coastal states play an important role in ensuring safe navigation of vessels in the Middle East. Japan has been reaching out to the coastal states to gain their understanding of Japan's efforts.

Fig. III-1-1-10 Information Gathering Activities by the JSDF (image)

- Purpose: Gather information necessary to ensure the safety of Japan-related vessels as part of the government's navigation safety measures
  (Note) When further action of the JSDF is found to be necessary due to unforeseen circumstances or other changes in the situation, maritime security actions will be ordered (vessels to be protected are Japan-related ones (Note), and action will be taken depending on the circumstances).
- Assets used: 1 destroyer (equipped with 1 patrol helicopter) and 1 P-3C patrol aircraft (using vessels and aircraft of the Deployment Air Force for Counter Piracy Enforcement)
  ⇒It is possible to continuously gather information on navigation of vessels in the relevant waters, situation of the surrounding waters, and presence of any unusual events
- Areas for information gathering activities: The three high seas of the Gulf of Oman, the northern Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden on the eastern side of the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait (including the exclusive economic zones (EEZ))



(Note) In addition to Japanese vessels and foreign vessels with Japanese nationals onboard, it also refers to vessels that are important to the stable economic activities of Japanese citizens, including foreign vessels operated by a Japanese ship operator, and foreign vessels transporting Japanese cargo.

Section 2 Fundamental Reinforcement of Japan's Defense Capabilities

The characters of combat and modes of attack in modern warfare have changed significantly from those of the traditional ones. In addition to traditional forms of invasion through air, sea and land seen to date, ways of warfare combined with large-scale missile attacks using ballistic and cruise missiles with enhanced precision strike capabilities; hybrid warfare including information warfare such as false flag operations;[1] asymmetric attacks through space, cyberspace

Fig. III-1-2-1 Future Cross-Domain Operations (image)



1 An operation to create the appearance of receiving political or military attack for the purpose of denouncing the enemy or enhancing the legitimacy of one's own country

and electromagnetic spectrum domains with unmanned assets (equipment); and rhetoric that could be interpreted as open threats implying the use of nuclear weapons by nuclear power have emerged.

In light of this, Japan requires deterrence that leads opponents to conclude unilateral changes to the status quo by force would be difficult. To this end, we should enhance our defense capabilities coping with the adversary's ability more radically than before; and indicate our intention that we will never tolerate unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts in any situation.

The Ministry of Defense (MOD) and the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) will fundamentally reinforce our defense capabilities with an emphasis on seven priority areas to enhance deterrence and response capabilities, focused on adversaries' capabilities and new ways of warfare. These seven priority areas are as follows: 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 and civil protection efforts, and sustainability and resiliency.

See Fig. III-1-2-1 (Future Cross-Domain Operations (image)), Part II, Chapter 1, Section 4 (Revision of the Three Documents), Part II, Chapter 2, Section 2 (Key Capabilities for Fundamental Reinforcement of Defense Capabilities (Seven Priority Areas))

1 Strengthening of Stand-off Defense Capabilities

1 Basic Concept

Stand-off defense capabilities refer to the ability to engage invading warships and/or landing forces from outside the threat zone. By attacking from outside the threat zone with long range weapons such as stand-off missiles with a longer range and high survivability to evade interception, the JSDF can effectively interdict attacks against Japan while ensuring the safety of its personnel. Furthermore, stand-off defense capabilities also are employed as counterstrike capabilities.

Commentary

Stand-off Defense Capabilities

Q: What are stand-off defense capabilities? Why are they important?

Stand-off defense capabilities refer to the ability to protect Japan's territory, which extends about 3,000 kilometers in all four directions, by countering invading naval vessels, landing forces, and others from outside the range of their radars and missiles.

In the modern age, advances in military technology are making it increasingly difficult to detect the launch of adversary missiles, particularly in advance of a first strike. In this context, the most important thing for protecting the lives and peaceful livelihoods of the people of Japan—while continuing to adhere to an exclusively defense-oriented policy—is to reduce the possibility of an armed attack from the very beginning, thereby preventing an opponent from launching the first strike. By strengthening stand-off defense capabilities, it is possible to convince a potential aggressor that any attempts to intrude on Japanese territory will be decisively blocked, whether by naval vessels, landing forces, or other means, reducing the possibility of an armed attack in the first place. Therefore, stand-off defense capabilities are an essential part of Japan's efforts to maintain its national defense while continuing to adhere to an exclusively defense-oriented policy.

Q: Are stand-off missiles also employed as part of counterstrike capabilities?

In recent years, as missile capabilities grow significantly advanced both in quality and quantity, it is becoming increasingly difficult to fully counter such threats in the vicinity of Japan using existing missile defense networks alone.

For this reason, it is necessary to possess counterstrike capabilities that can deter further armed attacks while missile defense networks intercept incoming missiles.

In cases where an armed attack against Japan has occurred, and as part of that attack ballistic missiles and other means have been used, counterstrike capabilities enable Japan to mount effective counterstrikes against the opponent's territory in accordance with the Three Conditions for the "use of force" as a minimum necessary self-defense measure that cannot be avoided to prevent such an attack.

While stand-off missiles are designed to be used for

countering naval vessels, landing forces, and others, they can also be used as part of counterstrike capabilities.

While decisions on which assets to use and how to use them are to be made on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the actual situation, it is considered that, above all, possessing such capabilities provides a deterrent for dissuading an opponent from launching an attack, thereby reducing the possibility of an armed attack from the very beginning.

Q: Won't the deployment of stand-off missiles only serve to heighten tensions in the region?

Strengthening defense capabilities, which includes stand-off defense capabilities, is essential for protecting the lives and peaceful livelihoods of the people of Japan as we face the most extreme and complex security environment since the end of World War II.

In addition, these capabilities are employed strictly within the scope of the Constitution and international law, while also adhering to an exclusively defense-oriented policy. There is no change to the fact that Japan's defense capabilities are "the minimum defense capabilities necessary for self-defense and will be used for the first time when Japan is subject to an opponent's armed attack."

Furthermore, given that in a single attack, the Japan Self-Defense Forces could unilaterally incur casualties from preemptive precision strikes and other attacks, as well as the fact that the side that strikes first has an overwhelming advantage, it is essential to establish a framework that would dissuade an opponent from even launching the first strike; that is, by convincing them that achieving the objectives of an invasion would be difficult, and that it would be better to abandon any attempt altogether.

While stand-off missiles can also be used as part of counterstrike capabilities, their primary objective is to disrupt and defeat invading naval vessels, landing forces, and others at an early stage and from a distance. Of course, missiles will not be used for preemptive strikes, and moreover, the quantities thereof are only at a level necessary for disrupting and defeating invading parties. They also do not include missiles that would be a threat to other countries.

For these reasons, it is believed that efforts to strengthen Japan's defense capabilities, including its stand-off defense capabilities, will not lead to heightened tensions in the region. Having said that, we intend to clearly communicate the specific concepts behind Japan's national security policy to other countries and ensure full transparency when working to strengthen defense capabilities.

2 Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF

The MOD/JSDF is fundamentally strengthening our stand-off defense capabilities. Stand-off missiles can conduct layered attacks using their longer range against invading warships and/or landing forces from various locations across Japan. Furthermore, we can compel the adversary to take more complex and challenging countermeasures by using various stand-off missiles with different characteristics in range, speed, flying trajectories, etc. To this end, we will promptly procure foreign-made stand-off missiles and, while supporting the expansion of production capacity for domestic stand-off missiles, secure the necessary and sufficient quantities at an early stage. Furthermore, we will promote initiatives to secure a set of functions required for stand-off missiles operations including the collection of target information and command and control and accelerate research and development as well as mass-production efforts to acquire operational capability for more advanced stand-off missiles.

a. Upgraded Type-12 Surface-to-Ship Missiles

The MOD/JSDF has been working on the development and acquisition of the Upgraded Type-12 surface-to-ship missile (SSM; surface-, ship- and air-launched variants). The MOD/JSDF completed the development of the surface-launched variant in FY2025, and plans to complete the development of the ship- and air-launched variants in FY2026 and FY2027, respectively. The surface-launched variant was deployed in FY2025 as the Type 25 Surface-to-Ship Guided Missile to the 5th Surface-to-Ship Missile Regiment at Camp Kengun (Kumamoto Prefecture). An additional deployment to the same regiment is also planned in FY2026, followed by deployment to the Artillery School Unit at Camp Fuji (Shizuoka Prefecture) in FY2027. The ship-launched variant will be put into operation on the destroyer JS Teruzuki (home port: Yokosuka) and the air-launched variant on upgraded F-2 fighter aircraft (to be deployed to Hyakuri Air Base (Ibaraki Prefecture)) in the same year.



Ground equipment of the Type-25 Surface-to-Ship Guided Missile deployed to a unit at Camp Kengun

b. Type-25 Hyper Velocity Gliding Projectiles

In FY2025, the MOD/JSDF completed the research on the hyper velocity gliding projectile for the defense of remote islands and deployed it as the Type-25 Hyper Velocity Gliding Projectile (Type-25 HGP) to the Artillery School Unit at Camp Fuji (Shizuoka Prefecture). In FY2026, it will also be deployed to Camp Kamifurano (Hokkaido) and Camp Ebino (Miyazaki Prefecture) following the establishment of operation units. We also continue the development of the upgraded type of the hyper velocity gliding projectile for the defense of remote islands.

c. New Surface-to-Ship and Surface-to-Surface Precision Guided Missiles

The MOD/JSDF began to develop new surface-to-ship and surface-to-surface precision guided missiles with improved long-range flying performance and precision guidance performance, which utilized the ground equipment of the Upgraded Type-12 SSM from FY2024.



Destroyer JS Chokai conducting training to mount dummy Tomahawk missiles (September 2025)

d. Foreign-made[2] Stand-off Missiles

We have been pursuing research on hypersonic missiles since FY2023, and have commenced early mass production in 2026.

e. Foreign-made Stand-off Missiles

As well as acquiring mass-produced domestic stand-off missiles, we will continue acquiring foreign-made stand-off missiles. In this regard, we decided to procure U.S.-made Tomahawk missiles, which was already in mass production, and began the procurement in FY2025. We decided to promptly secure sufficient stand-off missiles operation capabilities before the expanded manufacturing system for domestic stand-off missiles is established, by adding Tomahawk launching capabilities to Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) vessels as well as educating and training personnel. In March 2026, the destroyer JS Chokai became Japan's first vessel capable of launching Tomahawk. By around the summer of 2026, we plan to confirm, through flight tests and other activities, that crew members are capable of performing actual missions, including their readiness. With regard to the Joint Strike Missile (JSM), a Norway-made stand-off missile, the delivery was originally scheduled for FY2021, but delays persisted due to the impact of COVID-19. The missile was delivered in FY2025, and we will continue to work toward the start of operation.

f. Gathering of Target Information and Other Functions Necessary for Command and Control

In terms of command and control, the MOD/JSDF plans to promote the development of functions, such as those necessary to smoothly implement centralized command activities, with stand-off missile operations as the core. Furthermore, we started building satellite constellations[3] at the end of FY2025, by sequentially launching small artificial satellites, with the aim of putting them into full-scale operation in FY2027, so that we can acquire target detection and tracking capabilities which are necessary for the operations of stand-off missiles.

MOVIE: Understand stand-off defense capabilities in just one minute!
URL: https://www.instagram.com/reel/DSE__MGEIKz/?igsh=bWhxeDlsMThnajhr

2 Speed range of 5 times faster than the speed of sound.
3 A system in which numerous small artificial satellites are operated in a coordinated, integrated manner along a fixed orbit.

3 Points of the FY2026 Budget

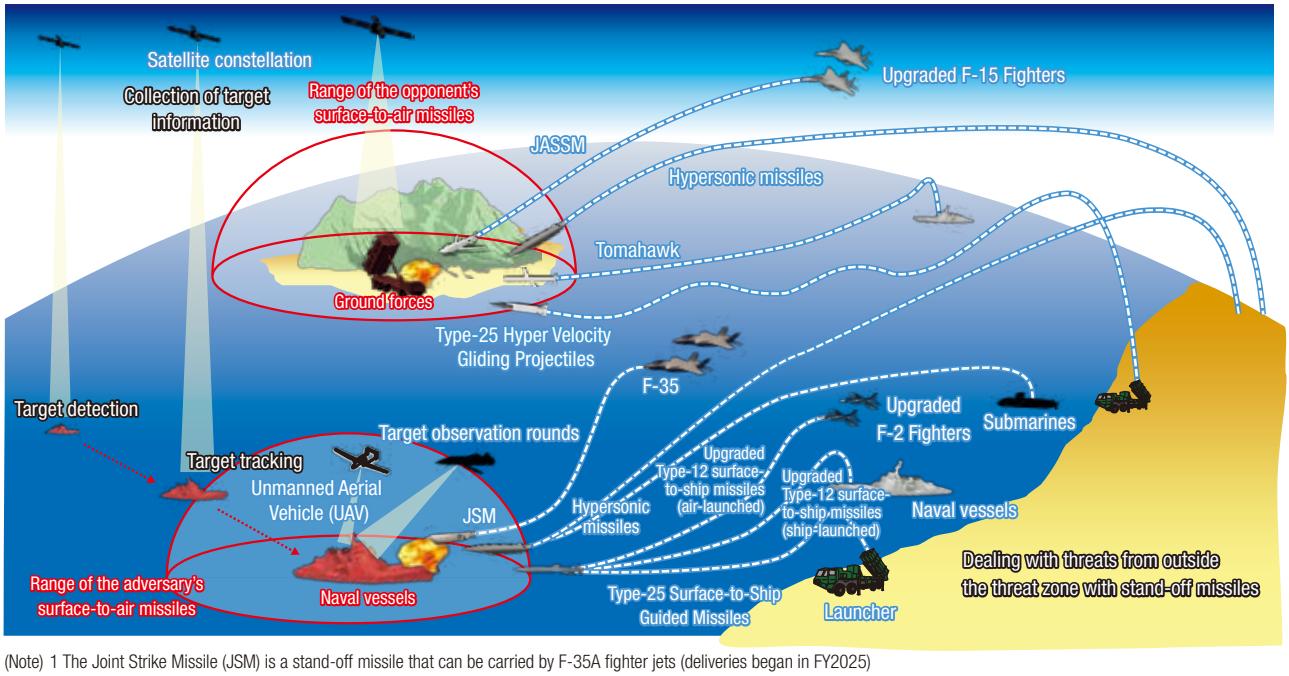
The MOD/JSDF has allocated approximately 973.3 billion yen in the FY2026 budget for initiatives to enhance stand-off defense capabilities. Major projects include the development and acquisition of the Upgraded Type-12 SSM, Type-25 HGP and hypersonic missiles, initiatives related to target information gathering and the expansion of the production structure of hypersonic missiles. As in FY2025, research and development, mass production, and acquisition will continue to be carried out for various stand-off missiles, each with different characteristics in terms of range, speed, flight trajectories, target detection, and platforms in FY2026.

See Fig. III-1-2-2 (Satellite Constellation (image)), Fig. III-1-2-3 (Future Operation of Stand-off Defense Capabilities (image))

Fig. III-1-2-2 Satellite Constellation (image)



Fig. III-1-2-3 Future Operation of Stand-off Defense Capabilities (image)



(Note) 1 The Joint Strike Missile (JSM) is a stand-off missile that can be carried by F-35A fighter jets (deliveries began in FY2025)
2 The Joint Air to Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM) is a stand-off missile capable of being mounted on the upgraded F-15 fighter jets, with deliveries scheduled to begin in FY2027.

2 Strengthening Integrated Air and Missile Defense Capabilities

1 Basic Concept

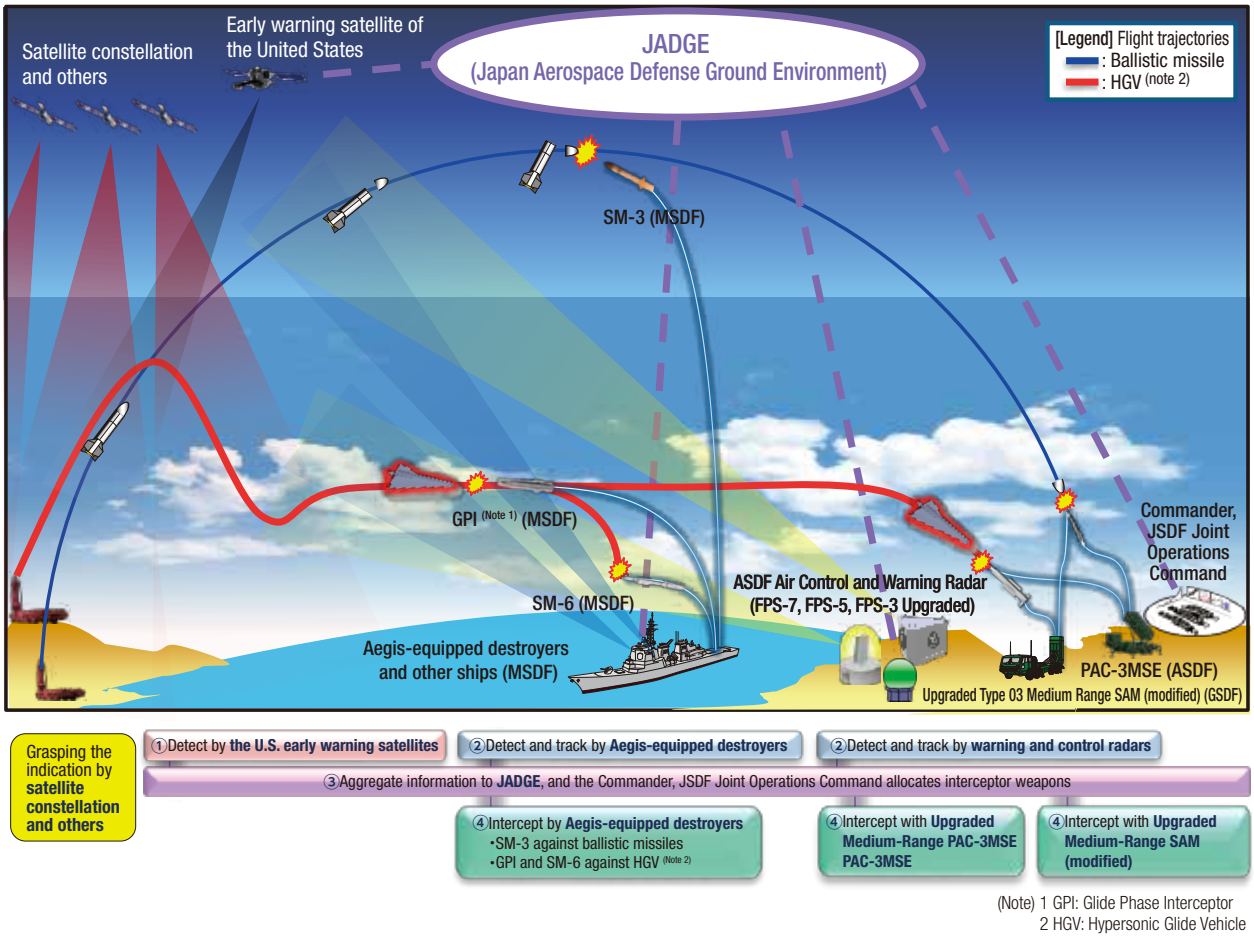
As Japan is surrounded by seas, responding to airborne threats - such as invading aircraft and missiles - is extremely important. In recent years, aerial threats to Japan have become increasingly diverse, complex and sophisticated, including capability enhancements of ballistic missiles equipped with multiple warheads[4] and/or maneuverable warheads,[5] higher-speed and longer-range cruise missiles, and stealth and multi-role[6] manned and unmanned aircraft, as well as the emergence of anti-ship ballistic missiles and hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs).

Given this factor, Japan will fundamentally enhance our detection, tracking, and interception capabilities against these airborne threats as well as strengthen our integrated air and missile defense capabilities by establishing a networked system that can centrally and optimally operate various sensors and shooters (interceptor missiles and their launching platforms).

The MOD/JSDF, as part of their integrated air and missile defense, will not only intercept missile attacks against Japan with the missile defense network strengthened both in quality and quantity, but also will deter the adversary's missile attacks themselves by containing their launches with our counterstrike capabilities - such as stand-off defense capabilities - in combination with missile defense.

See Fig. III-1-2-4 (Intercepting Part of Future Integrated Air and Missile Defense (Image)), Part II, Chapter 4, Section 3-5 (Destruction Measures against Ballistic Missiles or Other Objects)

Fig. III-1-2-4 Intercepting Part of Future Integrated Air and Missile Defense (Image)



(Note) 1 GPI: Glide Phase Interceptor
2 HGV: Hypersonic Glide Vehicle

4 One ballistic missile with multiple warheads
5 A warhead that can maneuver autonomously via wings, rudder, or rocket propulsion to avoid interception or increase hit probability during reentry into the atmosphere
6 To enable the execution of multiple missions such as air control combat, various attacks, reconnaissance, etc. by changing equipment

2 Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF

Japan has been advancing the development of its defense framework against ballistic missile attacks. Our Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system was initiated in 2004, including equipping MSDF Aegis destroyers with ballistic missile intercept capabilities and deploying Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC)-3 units.

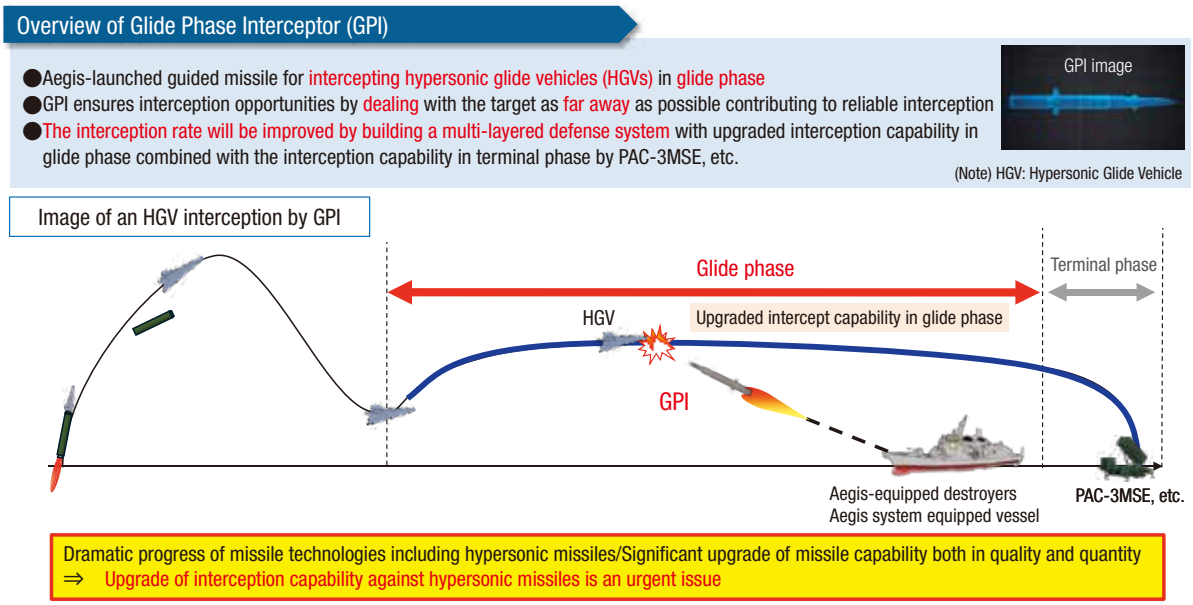
Meanwhile, it is necessary to strengthen our integrated air and missile defense capabilities by establishing a framework that operates air-defense systems, which have traditionally been employed separately by each JSDF Services, together with BMD equipment, in order to minimize our damage from aerial threats.

In this regard, we will standardize and streamline the interceptor systems of each service of the JSDF, including their maintenance and supply chains, and we will enhance the performance of the ASDF's fixed warning and control radars and proceed with their replacement by next-generation radars in order to strengthen target detection and tracking capabilities against threats such as HGVs. In addition, we will improve the PAC-3 Missile Segment Enhancement (MSE)'s[7] capability to counter HGVs and the like by upgrading Patriot with a new radar. At the same time, we will increase our multi-layered missile defense means by conducting development to enhance capabilities of the Ground Self- Defense Force's (GSDF) existing Upgraded Type-03 Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Guided Missile (modified), which is capable of countering cruise missiles, aircraft and so forth, and by utilizing existing production technologies and facilities to add capabilities for engaging HGVs and ballistic missiles.

Regarding technical cooperation on BMD between Japan and the United States, we are co-developing the Glide Phase Interceptor (GPI) — an interceptor capable of engaging HGVs at the farthest possible range.

See Fig. III-1-2-5 (Overview of GPI)

Fig. III-1-2-5 Overview of GPI



3 Points of the FY2026 Budget

The MOD/JSDF has allocated approximately 509.1 billion yen in FY2026 for initiatives to enhance integrated air and missile defense capabilities. Major projects include the reinforcement of interception assets as well as sensors and networks. Among them, as part of efforts to strengthen interception assets, we plan to improve the GSDF's Upgraded Type-03

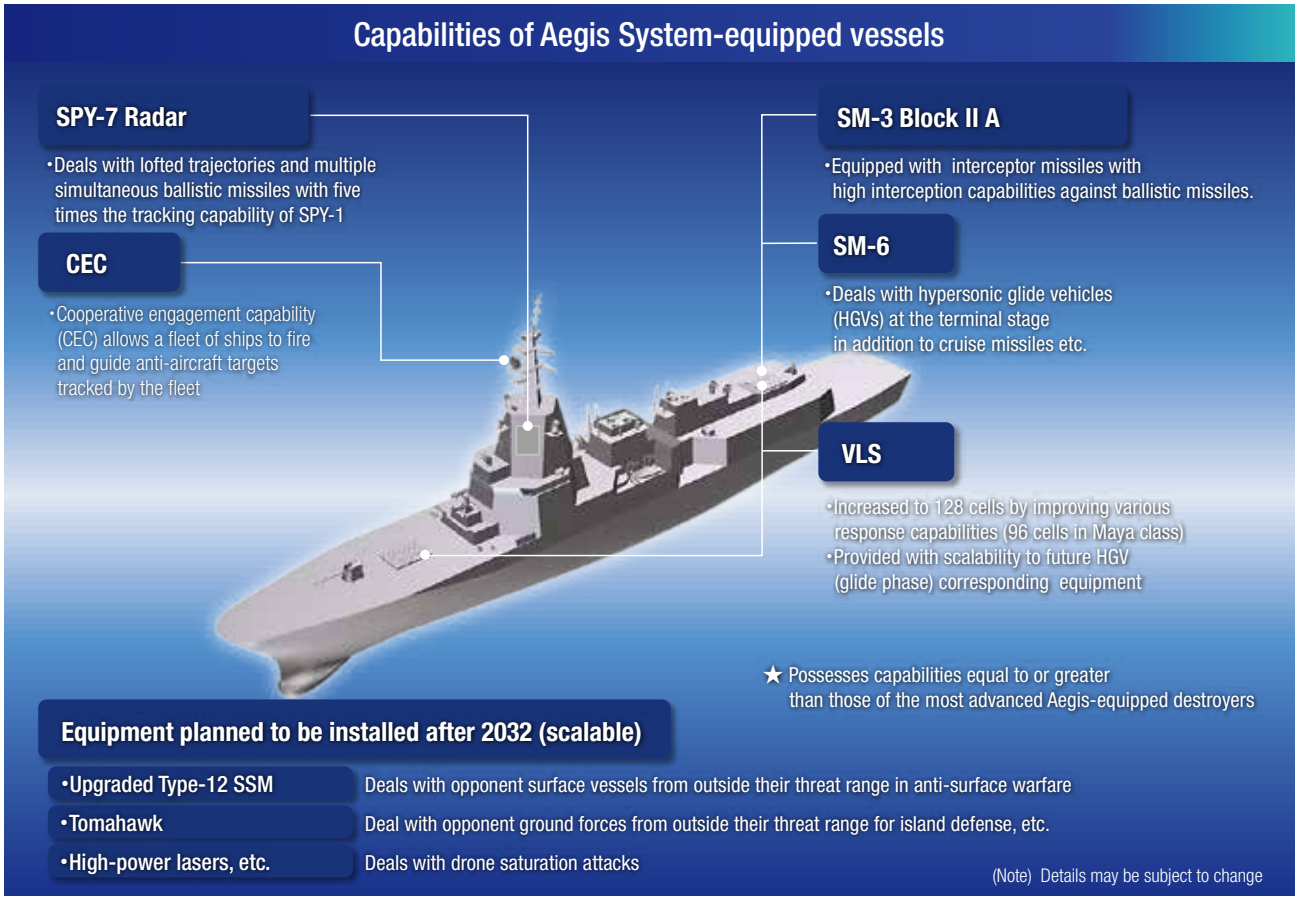
REFERENCE: Integrated Air and Missile Defense
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/policy/defense/bmd/index.html

7 This interceptor missile that, compared to the conventional PAC-3, extends its interception altitude against ballistic missiles from around a dozen kilometers to several tens of kilometers, meaning that the coverage of protection (area) will expand more than twice.

Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (modified) to enhance its capabilities, acquire the Standard Missile (SM)-3 Block IIA,[8] which was jointly developed by Japan and the United States[9] and to be deployed on Aegis destroyers.

See Fig. III-1-2-6 (Aegis System-Equipped Vessels (image)), Reference 17 (History of Efforts for BMD Development in Japan)

Fig. III-1-2-6 Aegis System-Equipped Vessels (image)



MOVIE: UNIT-4 (Air Defense Artillery)
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coZf5SbfC-M

8 For the Japan-U.S. co-development, it is necessary to export weapons from Japan to the United States. In accordance with the Chief Cabinet Secretary's statement issued in 2004, it was determined that the Three Principles on Arms Exports would not apply to the Ballistic Missile Defense system and related matters under the condition that strict controls are maintained. Based on these circumstances, it was decided that the prior consent of Japan could be given to the third party transfer of the Standard Missile (SM)-3 Block IIA under certain conditions. This decision was formally announced in the Joint Statement of the Japan-U.S. "2+2" in 2011. The Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology (Three Principles) received Cabinet approval in 2014. However, with regard to exceptional measures instigated before this decision, overseas transfers will continue to be organized in the guidelines for the principles as allowable under the Three Principles.

9 In comparison with former SM-3 Block IA, SM-3 Block IIA have not only extended intercept altitude and coverage of protection, but also enhanced defeating capability and simultaneous engagement capability. The interception capabilities of SM-3 Block IIA have been enhanced against ballistic missiles equipped with interception avoidance measures such as a decoy and ballistic missiles launched with an intention to avoid being intercepted by taking a higher-than-normal trajectory (lofted trajectory). In 2022, the Aegis destroyer JS "Maya" became the first MSDF vessel to conduct a test launch of the SM-3 Block IIA, successfully intercepting the target. In a lofted trajectory, a ballistic missile is launched at a higher angle than normal. This results in a higher-than-normal flight path, which increases the reentry speed and makes interception more difficult. Other types include the minimum energy trajectory, which maximizes range, and the depressed trajectory, which maintains a low altitude and enables high-speed flight.

3 Strengthening of Unmanned Defense Capabilities

1 Basic Concept

Generally speaking, unmanned assets (equipment) can be operated without having to deal with personnel losses even for long periods of time and in harsh environments and have the feature to impose costs on opponents.

Given these characteristics, the MOD/JSDF will effectively employ unmanned assets across a wide range of missions—on land, at sea, underwater, and in the air—to secure an asymmetric advantage while minimizing the risk and burden on personnel engaged in missions. This will be achieved by using unmanned assets to streamline tasks that have traditionally been handled by manned equipment and to enable new operations by unmanned systems.

2 Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF

With the recent introduction of unmanned assets and rapid progress of technological innovation in various foreign countries, the character of warfare has undergone significant changes.

Against this backdrop, for Japan, it is more urgent than ever to promptly establish **an asymmetric and multi-layered defense architecture** utilizing not only manned platforms but also the combination of a large number of low-cost unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) and unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) in order to defend against various forms of invasion including those unmanned assets.

On the other hand, the MOD/JSDF's activities include those that can only be performed by manned assets at present, such as the real-time tracking of submarines by MSDF patrol aircraft. Therefore, the MOD/JSDF will take into account the characteristics of both unmanned and manned assets and utilize both in an optimal manner to enhance our units, including through the introduction of unmanned assets.

KEY WORD

Asymmetrical and Multi-layered Defense Architecture

This defense architecture enables us to secure an asymmetric advantage and respond effectively by flexibly deploying a large number of low-cost unmanned assets against the enemy's expensive manned assets. Specifically, it involves combining a large number of low-cost UAVs, USVs and UUVs in a multi-layered manner tailored to the mission, terrain, and nature of the threat, and coordinating them with manned assets to establish a flexible and multi-layered defense architecture at each stage of detection, identification and response.

3 Points of the FY2026 Budget

The MOD/JSDF has allocated approximately 277.3 billion yen in FY2026 for initiatives to enhance unmanned defense capabilities. Major projects include the reinforcement of intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting (ISRT) functions and the research and development of unmanned assets.

In particular, the MOD/JSDF takes circumstances surrounding unmanned assets into consideration and plans to acquire a large number of low-cost UAVs, USVs and UUVs in an aim to establish the Synchronized, Hybrid, Integrated and Enhanced Littoral Defense (SHIELD) with unmanned assets within FY2027. Specifically, we will acquire first-person view (FPV) modular UAVs for short-range information gathering, small attack UAVs for searching for and identifying vehicles, craft and the like and attacking them by ramming, ship-launched UAVs for strike against enemy vessels, small multi-purpose USVs, ship-based small UAVs capable of improving the information gathering and warning and surveillance capabilities of surface vessels and of striking enemy vessels and so forth, land-launched anti-ship UAVs for long-range strike against surface vessels, radar site defense UAVs to defend radar sites against hostile UAVs and small multi-purpose UUVs for information gathering against naval assets.

With these assets, we will establish a defense system capable of implementing asymmetric and multi-layered measures by fully leveraging the characteristics of unmanned assets. These include coordinating manned and unmanned assets to counter adversary invasion forces comprising highvalue assets such as surface vessels at sea, while integrating stand-off defense capabilities. In addition, along Japan's coasts, we will utilize a large number of various unmanned assets to effectively counter landing forces.

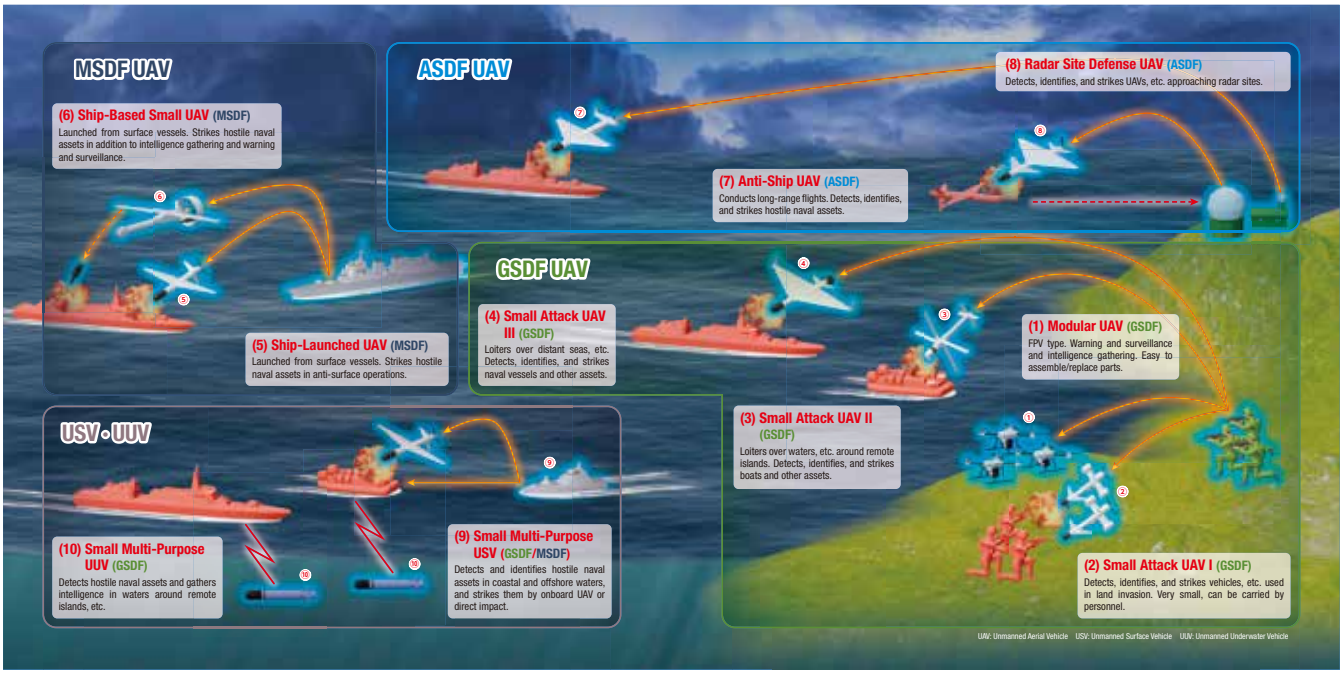
At the same time, the MOD/JSDF plans to acquire the MQ-9B (Sea Guardian) long-endurance unmanned aircraft to implement seamless ISRT. The MSDF will commence the operation of the MQ-9B in FY2028; however, as part of an early introduction project, two aircraft will be used at Kanoya Air Base starting in FY2027 for flights conducted by a private company. At the same time, in order to further enhance the effectiveness of measures against airspace violations, including from a cost-effectiveness perspective, we will utilize this early introduction project to examine operational guidelines necessary for the use of long-endurance unmanned aircraft in such measures.



Example of SHIELD components

See Fig. III-1-2-7 (Synchronized, Hybrid, Integrated and Enhanced Littoral Defense Using Unmanned Assets (SHIELD) (image))

Fig. III-1-2-7 Synchronized, Hybrid, Integrated and Enhanced Littoral Defense Using Unmanned Assets (SHIELD) (Illustration)



Commentary

Establishment of New Provisional Drone Operations Unit (Tentative Name)

Since the importance of unmanned assets as a game-changing technology was highlighted in the current Three Documents, technological advancements in this area have continued to accelerate at a remarkable pace up to the present day. Unmanned assets are expected to play a key role primarily in missions known as the 4Ds: dull, dirty, dangerous, and deep/distant, and so the MOD/JSDF is working to strengthen our unmanned defense capabilities.

Since concluding a contract with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries in 2023, the Japan Air Self-Defense Force has been working with the company on a demonstration project for UAV designed for collecting target information. UAVs designed for collecting target information are unmanned assets used for information gathering connected to targets necessary for operating stand-off missiles and other systems, thus playing a vital role in the successful deployment of stand-off defense capabilities.

In FY2026, along with acquiring UAVs designed for collecting target information, there are plans to form a new Provisional Unmanned Assets Operations unit (tentative name) for conducting testing and other activities and establish operational guidelines. Going forward, we will work on deploying unmanned defense capabilities while incorporating the results and other data acquired through testing conducted by the Provisional Unmanned Assets Operations unit (tentative name).

Commentary

Dealing with Underwater Mines Using Unmanned Assets

During an exercise to dispose of real underwater mines conducted in 2025, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force successfully disposed of underwater mines using an unmanned underwater mine clearing system. There are few cases of successfully disposing of real underwater mines using unmanned assets, even internationally. This achievement goes to show that Japan's anti-underwater mine capabilities have entered a new stage.

As a weapon, underwater mines can demonstrate high military effectiveness at a relatively low cost. They have a significant impact in both deterrence and operations from the early stages of a conflict, such as by blocking sea lines of communication and preventing landings. Anti-underwater mine operations to combat these impacts have traditionally required highly skilled personnel to operate in dangerous environments.

Along with significantly reducing these risks, the use of unmanned underwater mine clearing systems will enable underwater mines to be dealt with in a sustainable and flexible manner. Beyond merely demonstrating technical superiority, these results are also being regarded as potentially contributing to strengthening Japan's deterrence capabilities by ensuring maritime superiority and enhancing the reliability of protection for sea lines of communication.



An underwater mine being disposed of by an unmanned asset

4 Strengthening Cross-domain Operation Capabilities

Cross-domain operations are those that organically integrate operational capabilities from the space, cyber, and electromagnetic spectrum domains with those from the traditional land, sea, and air domains, amplifying overall effectiveness through synergistic effects. Recognizing the importance of offsetting disadvantages in one domain with strengths in others, the MOD/JSDF will enhance their necessary capabilities in the space, cyber, and electromagnetic spectrum domains to defend Japan.

1 Space Domain

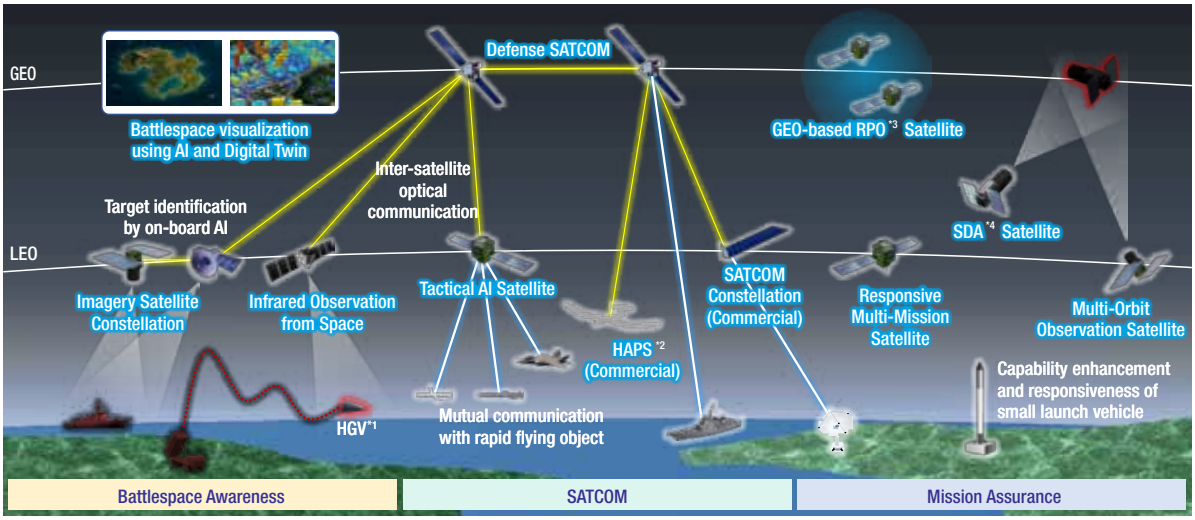
(1) Basic Concept

The space domain is now the foundation of the lives of citizens and national security, and securing superiority in space utilization is of great importance to Japan. For this reason, it is necessary to strengthen our space operations capabilities, including the ability to gather information using the space domain.

In 2023, Japan's Strategic Headquarters for National Space Policy formulated the Space Security Initiative to concretize the challenges and policies related to space security and adopted the Basic Plan on Space Policy reflecting this initiative. According to the Space Security Initiative, the MOD/JSDF will leverage advanced technology research and development conducted by other government agencies for defense purposes to realize fundamental reinforcement of Japan's defense capabilities. The Basic Plan on Space Policy states that the government aims to ensure the safe and stable use of outer space, and establish a positive feedback loop between security and the development of the space industry. This will be accomplished through measures such as information gathering through Information Gathering Satellites (IGS)[10] and satellite constellations as well as establishment of a Space Domain Awareness (SDA) framework.

See Section 1-1-4 (Responses in the Space Domain), Section 3-6 (Efforts Related to the Space Domain), Fig. III-1-2-8 (Strengthening Defense Capabilities in the Space Domain (image)), Part I, Chapter 4, Section 3-1 (Trends in Space Domain)

Fig. III-1-2-8 Strengthening Defense Capabilities in the Space Domain (Image)



*1 HGV: Hypersonic Glide Vehicle *2 HAPS: High Altitude Platform Stations *3 RPO: Rendezvous and Proximity Operations *4 SDA: Space Domain Awareness

MOVIE: ASDF begins Space Domain Awareness
URL: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=qoBwBWBR0-8

10 IGS of the Japanese Government are operated by the Cabinet Satellite Intelligence Center. The MOD, along with other ministries and agencies, utilizes the imagery intelligence provided by the IGS.

Commentary

Background behind Formulation of Space Domain Defense Guidelines

In Japan, a 1969 Diet resolution restricted the use of space to peaceful purposes. However, with the enactment of the Basic Space Act in 2008, which made it permissible to develop and use space for national security, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) began full-scale use of the space domain.

Space is now a vital part of operations in all domains. For example, gathering information on targets using satellites and utilizing satellite communications make it possible to execute operational cycles at a previously unimaginable pace. In the National Defense Strategy formulated in 2022, the space domain was positioned as vitally important for conducting cross-domain operations, and since then, the MOD has been steadily strengthening defense capabilities in this domain.

Space development was once led by the national government, but in recent years, private companies have been making remarkable progress in developing space-related technologies; technologies that should also be actively adopted by the defense sector. Accordingly, it is essential that the MOD comprehensively and concretely shares its plans for the space domain to enhance predictability for private companies. However, while the government had previously issued a document outlining the overall direction of space policy related to security (the Space Security Initiative), there were no documents from the MOD or JSDF indicating the direction of strengthening defense capabilities in the space domain.

It was against this backdrop that the Space Domain Defense Guidelines were formulated, in July 2025. We will promote "a virtuous cycle between defense and the economy"; that is, the defense sector will take the lead in investing in advanced private-sector services and technologies, thereby further strengthening defense capabilities in the space domain. At the same time, this will contribute to further developing private-sector technology.

(2) Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF

Based on the National Security Strategy and other documents, the MOD/JSDF has been working to develop the assets and operational capabilities necessary for SDA missions. In July 2025, we formulated the Space Domain Defense Guidelines, outlining a four-pronged approach to strengthening defense capabilities in the space domain: (1) rapid and accurate battlespace awareness, (2) ensuring satellite communications as the operational foundation, (3) mission assurance, (4) disruption of C4I and other capabilities of the opponent. The guidelines also outline specific directions for initiatives and necessary technologies.

Furthermore, these guidelines state that MOD/JSDF will build a mutually complementary structure with our ally and like-minded countries in terms of further strengthening capabilities and operational cooperation based on the recognition that cooperation with such partners is indispensable. At the same time, promoting investments in technology development, including dual-use technologies, by private companies as the MOD/JSDF presents its needs and enhances its information provision efforts. This approach seeks to create a virtuous cycle that strengthens both defense capabilities and economic power.

(3) Strengthening Defense Capabilities in the Space Domain

a. Rapid and Accurate Battlespace Awareness

To gather information in real time across the vast regions surrounding Japan, observations from space have become essential.

First of all, to ensure the effectiveness of our stand-off defense capabilities, Japan has been building an imagery satellite constellation aimed at acquiring detection and tracking capabilities of target information since FY2025.

Furthermore, recognizing that infrared observation from space is effective in swiftly detecting and tracking HGVs that are increasingly being deployed by neighboring countries, the MOD/JSDF is promoting research and development of in-space demonstration of infrared sensors and related technologies using the space demonstration platform of JAXA's HTV-X, as well as highly sensitive, wide-band infrared detector elements, while considering potential collaboration with the United States.

In addition, the MOD/JSDF will build a seamless information gathering system by acquiring substantial satellite imagery through Information Gathering Satellites and civilian satellites.

Furthermore, in order to ensure decision-making superiority, we will explore the development of an environment in which vast amounts of data acquired by satellites are instantly processed with AI, and digital twins are utilized to provide commanders and others with the necessary information in a format that is intuitive to use in real time.

See 1 (Strengthening of Stand-off Defense Capabilities)

b. Ensuring Satellite Communications as the Operational Foundation

Satellite communications, which enable the real-time transmission of target information and the sharing of

information among units located at a distance, form the foundation of all of the MOD/JSDF's operations.

In the MOD/JSDF, three X-band defense communications satellites of the Kirameki series are currently responsible for core command and control communications. Starting in FY2025, the MOD/JSDF has proceeded with the development of next-generation defense communications satellites, which will succeed Kirameki-2, and will begin manufacturing the successor to Kirameki-1 starting in FY2026.

We are also advancing the demonstration of a next-generation defense technology demonstration satellite designed to validate thermal control technologies capable of handling the increasing performance of satellite mission equipment and inter-satellite optical communications, as well as of tactical AI satellites aimed at establishing technologies for on-board integration and processing of information gathered by various satellites and for two-way communications with various equipment.

Furthermore, the MOD/JSDF is considering expanded use of commercial services such as satellite communications constellation Starlink to meet increasing communications requirements. Additionally, the MOD/JSDF is preparing communications equipment and conducting demonstration tests to participate in PATS (Protected Anti-jam Tactical SATCOM), a U.S.-led framework for sharing satellite communication bandwidth and enabling high-resiliency communications.

c. Mission Assurance

As we are facing rapidly increasing threats and risks in outer space due to some countries strengthening their satellite jamming capabilities and a sharp rise in space debris, ensuring the use of outer space has become a pressing issue.

Thus far, the MOD/JSDF has been strengthening SDA capabilities to monitor the operational status of satellites from other countries, as well as to assess the intentions and capabilities of suspicious satellites. To be specific, the ASDF runs Space Situational Awareness (SSA) operation systems, SSA radars and satellite jamming detection systems. The MOD/JSDF also plans to launch an SDA satellite and begin operating laser ranging systems in FY2026.

We are also forging ahead with demonstration of various satellite technologies as described below:

- Multi-orbit observation demonstration satellite in LEO that detects satellite maneuvers in multiple orbits including LEO and GEO to improve SDA accuracy
- GEO-based RPO demonstration satellite capable of autonomous and highly maneuverable operations, designed to enhance SDA capabilities and build satellite protection capabilities
- Responsive multi-mission demonstration satellite capable of multi-mission operations and short checkout, designed to build response and recovery capabilities

In addition, to ensure the resiliency of the entire space systems, we will advance cybersecurity measures for the entire systems that connect satellites with ground stations, and to counter jamming of satellite positioning signals, we will promote the adoption of multi-GNSS systems and the public regulated service of the Cabinet Office's Quasi-Zenith Satellite System.[11]

d. Disruption of C4I and Other Capabilities of Opponent

In light of growing threats to the utilization of the space domain, including the diversification and multi-layered nature of the opponent's military operations, the MOD/JSDF will further strengthen our capabilities to disrupt the opponent's C4I as part of our response to threats in the space domain. In doing so, we will proceed with research and development of the technologies required for these initiatives.

See Fig. III-1-2-9 (Initiatives for Developing the Space Domain Awareness (SDA) System (image))

(4) Strengthening of Organizational Systems

The Space Operations Wing was established in FY2025 to build a robust operational structure for SDA satellites and enhance SDA capabilities. These efforts have further strengthened our space operations capabilities.

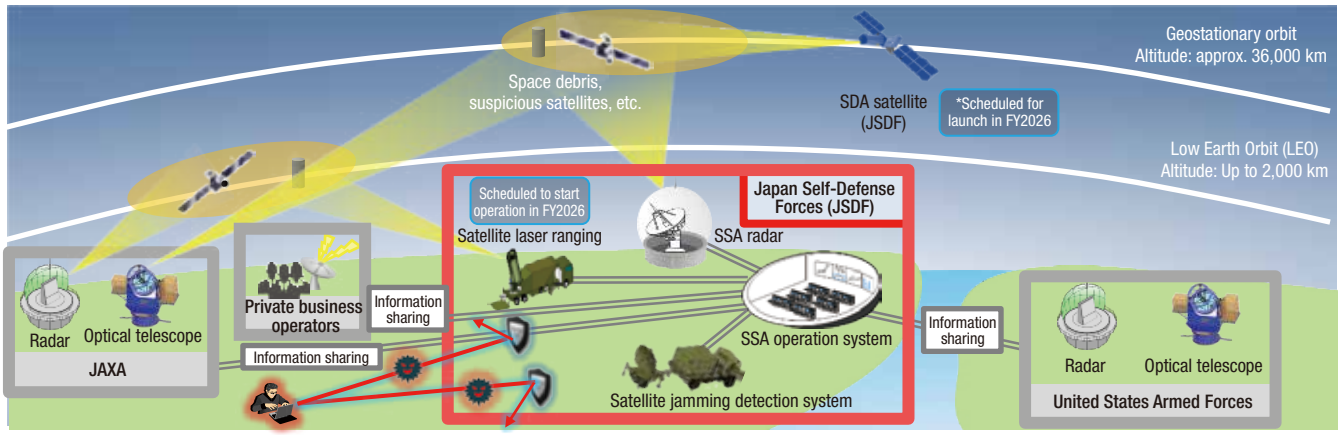
In addition, in FY2026, the launch of an SDA satellite and other measures will enhance SDA capabilities, enabling the full-scale operation of capabilities to disrupt C4I and other capabilities of opponent. Moreover, we will establish the "Space Operations Command." In light of these efforts and the fact that, for the ASDF, the space domain is no longer merely a target for surveillance activities but has become a domain for conducting operations, the ASDF will be reorganized into the "Aerospace Self-Defense Force."

Furthermore, to strengthen the structure for promoting space-related initiatives within the Internal Bureau, space division in charge of space-related defense buildup was established in the Bureau of Defense Buildup Planning in FY2026.

Furthermore, we will enhance collaboration, beginning with personnel development, through exchanges with relevant agencies, such as JAXA, as well as with the ally and like-minded countries, including the United States. This will strengthen organizational structures and the human resource base in the space domain. Additionally, we will work to secure talent by establishing a framework to effectively utilize space-related expertise accumulated across relevant ministries and agencies.

11 This refers to satellites set into orbit so that the satellites are capable of staying nearly right above one specific area for a long time by tilting the orbit and adopting an elliptical orbit, while ordinary stationary satellites stay in circular orbit on the equator. Multiple satellites are usually launched since a single satellite cannot stay online for 24 hours by itself. Users are able to receive signals from such satellites without being affected by obstacles, such as mountains and buildings, since the satellites pass nearly right above the users.

Fig. III-1-2-9 Initiatives for Developing the Space Domain Awareness (SDA) System (image)





Parliamentary Vice-Minister Wakabayashi presenting a unit flag to the ASDF Space Operations Wing at a unit establishment ceremony (March 2026)

(5) Strengthening Cooperation with Our Ally, Like-Minded Countries, and Others

a. Initiatives to Enhance Cooperation with Other Countries

Strengthening cooperation with the ally and like-minded countries is essential to ensure the stable use of outer space. Promoting collaboration to reduce threats in the space domain is needed as well. In 2022, at the United Nations General Assembly plenary session, eleven countries, including Japan, introduced the resolution, which called for an end to destructive Direct-Ascent Anti-SATellite (DA-ASAT) missile tests. The resolution was adopted with the support of 155 countries. To avoid risks stemming from misperception or miscalculation going forward, it is necessary to strengthen communication among relevant countries and emphasize the importance of Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBM) in outer space.

b. Cooperation with the United States

To promote further cooperation between Japanese and U.S. defense authorities in space, the two countries established the Japan-U.S. Space Cooperation Working Group (SCWG) at the deputy director general level. The SCWG has engaged in extensive discussions on space cooperation, including collaboration on space policy and strategy, cooperation between Japanese and U.S. space units (including the sharing of SDA information and training), and discussions on satellite constellations.

Furthermore, the governments of Japan and the United States hold the Japan–U.S. Comprehensive Space Dialogue (CSD), during which they exchange information on space policies, including security-related policies, and discuss future cooperation.

With regard to recent high-level exchanges, Japan and the United States welcomed bilateral and multilateral cooperation,[12] including the satellite constellation to detect and track HGV threats, and the actions taken under the Combined Space Operations (CSpO) initiative.[13]

Since cooperation with the United States is essential to carry out its SDA missions, steps are being taken to concretize operational information sharing with the United States. Additionally, we continue to participate in exercises, such as the Schriever Wargame, a U.S.-hosted multilateral space security tabletop exercise, and the Apollo Sentinel (formerly Global Sentinel) multinational exercise on space situation awareness. Through our participation, we aim to share threat perceptions in the space domain and strengthen multilateral cooperation and expertise in SDA. Furthermore,

12 This is a multilateral framework including the United States and other like-minded countries and intended to discuss space security. Since 2023, the MOD/JSDF has been participating as Japan's representatives.

13 Furthermore, during the Japan-U.S. "2+2" meeting in January 2023, both sides consider that attacks to, from, or within space present a clear challenge to the security of the Alliance, and affirmed such attacks, in certain circumstances, could lead to the invocation of Article V of the Japan-U.S. Treaty.

Japan has dispatched JSDF personnel to the U.S. Space Command Headquarters and the U.S. Space Command's Multinational Space Collaboration Office (MSC) and the like.



Participation in the CSpO initiative (December 2025)

c. Cooperation with Like-Minded Countries, Etc.

Because space has no concept of national borders, Japan must collaborate with other countries to monitor and understand the vast space domain. Japan has been cooperating and collaborating with like-minded countries in various fields through consultations, information sharing, and participation in multilateral exercises. These efforts include strengthening relations among defense authorities, working together on SDA information, and fostering collaboration among units. The MOD/JSDF joined the CSpO initiative in 2023 and will further strengthen its relationships with the ally and like-minded countries in the space domain while actively engaging in international efforts to ensure the stable use of outer space.

Japan is strengthening its collaboration and cooperation with several countries. For example, Japan and Australia have held consultations between their defense authorities, signed the Letter of Intent concerning a Defence Space Partnership, and formed a Space Working Group (SWG) to solidify their partnership in space. Moreover, Japan is deepening space cooperation with France, such as through intergovernmental space dialogues, consultations between defense authorities, dispatch of JSDF personnel to the French Space Command and participation in Spartex (formerly AsterX), a multilateral space exercise hosted by France. Japan is also progressing its collaboration and cooperation with the United Kingdom through consultations between their defense authorities and Space Engagement Talks; with Germany and Italy, via expert-level meetings and SWG meetings regarding space cooperation; with Canada, through tabletop exercises; with NATO, through participation in the Space Operations Commanders' Conference; and with India and the European Union, via dialogues on space policy.



Participation in the multilateral space exercise Spartex (February 2026)

(6) Points of the FY2026 Budget

The MOD/JSDF has allocated approximately 174.0 billion yen in the FY2026 budget for enhancing capabilities in the space domain. Major projects include the fielding of satellite communications networks, strengthen information gathering and other capabilities which leverage the space domain, enhancement of SDA and reinforcement of organizational structure in the space domain.

In particular, the MOD/JSDF will embark on the production of the successor to Kirameki-1 and develop ground equipment for the launch of the successor to the Kirameki-2.

2 Cyber Domain

(1) Basic Concept

Cyberspace, as used on the Internet and other platforms, encompasses a variety of services and communities, which has become an indispensable part of citizen's daily lives. Furthermore, it is a critical infrastructure even for military purposes including command and control and organization's network. It is also a vital domain for the national defense to execute cross-domain operations. Therefore, cyberattacks that compromise information assets and networks in cyberspace can have a significant impact on society and pose serious threats to national security.

In the cyber domain, it is important to gather and share information from peacetime to contingencies through cooperation with other countries, relevant ministries and agencies and the private-sectors, as well as to strengthen Japan's overall response capabilities in the field of cybersecurity. In coordination with the whole-of-government efforts in the field of cybersecurity, the MOD/JSDF will promote initiatives that strengthen cooperation with related ministries and agencies, critical infrastructure operators and the defense industry, while enhancing the level of its cybersecurity.

See Section 3-3 (Cybersecurity), Part I, Chapter 4, Section 3-2 (Trends in Space Domain)

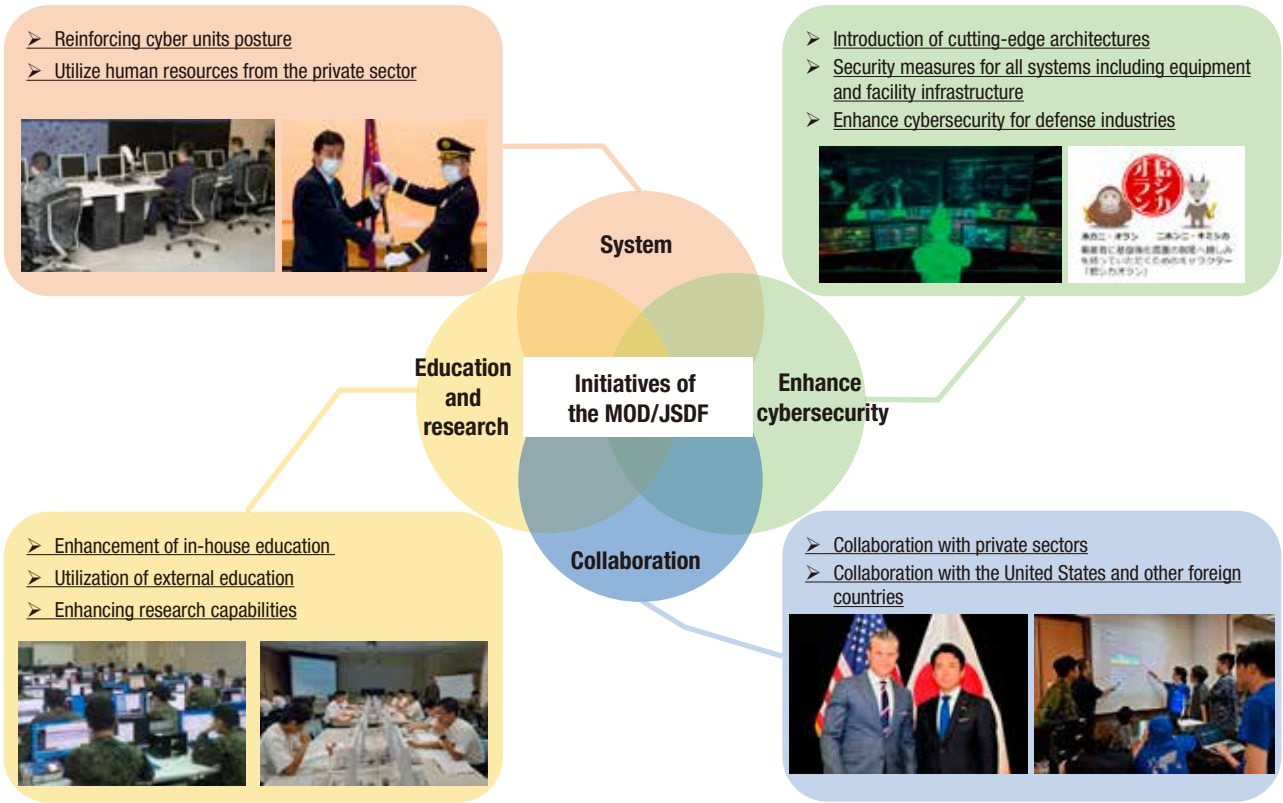
(2) Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF

The MOD/JSDF will coordinate with whole-of-government initiatives in the field of cybersecurity, including active cyber defense, even in peacetime, with a view to ensuring mission assurance in the event of a contingency. In doing so, the MOD/JSDF will establish a posture where persistent risk management is implemented, primarily on information and other systems critical in conducting joint operations. We will also leverage external human resources to further enhance our cybersecurity. The MOD/JSDF will protect its information systems and the like from all cyber threats with its high level of cybersecurity capabilities and also will use these capabilities to strengthen the national cybersecurity as a whole.

To this end, the MOD/JSDF will establish a posture that can protect its command and control capabilities as well as its high-priority equipment systems even under cyberattacks[14] along with a posture for supporting cyber defense for the defense industry by FY2027. Looking ahead, the MOD/JSDF will also establish a posture to support cybersecurity efforts undertaken by relevant ministries and agencies other than the JSDF and private companies.

See Fig. III-1-2-10 (Comprehensive Measures to Ensure Cyber Security within the MOD/JSDF), Reference 18 (Efforts in Recent Years by the MOD on Cybersecurity)

Fig. III-1-2-10 Comprehensive Measures to Ensure Cyber Security within the MOD/JSDF



14 Illegal intrusion, information theft, alteration or destruction, operation stop/malfunction of information systems, execution of unauthorized program, distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks, etc., which are made through cyberspace by abusing information communication networks, information systems, etc.

Commentary

New Missions in Cyberspace

In recent years, cyberattacks aimed at disrupting or destroying critical infrastructure have been conducted routinely. State-backed cyberattacks have also taken place in Japan, making them a tangible national security threat. In Russia's aggression against Ukraine, numerous cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure and satellite communications networks were carried out prior to the ground invasion. Considering this fact, it is entirely conceivable that cyberattacks are launched against critical infrastructure in the pre-contingency stage, with the intention of facilitating subsequent armed attacks. If the JSDF is unable to protect its command, control, and information systems, which form the foundation of its force projection, as well as the critical infrastructure upon which its activities depend from pre-contingency cyberattacks, it cannot ensure mission assurance in the event of a contingency.

Against the backdrop of increasingly serious threats in cyberspace, the Cyber Response Capability Strengthening Act and Necessary Arrangement of Relevant Acts, including amendments to the Self-Defense Forces Law, were enacted by the Diet in May 2025. Under this legislation, the JSDF has been granted the legal authority to conduct "Remote Access and Neutralization Measures" to prevent damage from certain serious cyberattacks that pose security concerns to JSDF command, control, and information systems, as well as to government and core infrastructure. The ability to respond to cyberattacks that fall short of armed attack during peacetime significantly contributes to the JSDF's mission assurance in a contingency and represents a major step toward improving Japan's overall cyber response capabilities. Furthermore, the MOD/JSDF will contribute to ensuring cybersecurity across Japan by supporting government-wide initiatives prescribed in the Cyber Response Capability Strengthening Act, including "Enhancement of Public Private Partnership" and "Utilizing I.D.C. (Information and Data under Communications)." These efforts will also lead to protecting the economic activities of Japanese citizens.

With a view to ensuring the successful execution of missions under any circumstances, the MOD/JSDF will continue to strengthen its cyber defense capability to respond seamlessly to increasingly sophisticated and advanced cyber threats, including expanding the organizational structure of the JSDF Cyber Defense Command, which is responsible for the new missions related to active cyber defense.



Defense Minister Koizumi and the Commander of the JSDF Cyber Defense Command

a. Establishing a System for Ensuring Cybersecurity

The JSDF Cyber Defense Command, which is a joint unit of the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF, responds to cyberattacks, provides support for training of cyber units of each JSDF service, and maintains and operates the Defense Information Infrastructure (DII),[15] a common network for the MOD/JSDF. The MOD/JSDF has continued to expand the capacity of the JSDF Cyber Defense unit and other cyber units of each JSDF service and promote the development of cyber workforce.

In addition, the MOD has been hiring personnel with advanced knowledge and skills as well as abundant experience and achievements in the field of cyber security as "Cybersecurity Advisor." Furthermore, The MOD/JSDF has been promoting a public-private personnel exchange system to employ people with practical experience in the private sector, as well as utilizing personnel from the private sector through service contracts and other means. The Ministry of Defense Cyber Contest has been held with the aim for uncovering talented individuals with cybersecurity expertise. Additionally, the MOD/JSDF has been hiring the candidates for JSDF reserve personnel equipped with cybersecurity

15 Common network for the entire JSDF, as the information and communications infrastructure necessary to perform the JSDF's duties, which is composed of data communications networks and voice communications networks and uses various lines such as micro lines owned and operated by the MOD, lines rented from telecommunications carriers, and satellite communications lines.

skills. The MOD/JSDF will continue its efforts to recruit and develop talented cyber workforce toward the fundamental reinforcement of its cyber defense capabilities.

See Part V, Chapter 2, Section 2-2 (Initiatives to Reinforce the Human Resource Base)

b. Security Enhancement

As cyberattacks and other threats are becoming more advanced and sophisticated every day, MOD/JSDF has shifted its approach to information system security measures from temporary "risk elimination" to continuous "risk management," and has introduced the Risk Management Framework (RMF),which continuously analyzes and evaluates risks and implements necessary security measures even after the start of the information system operation.

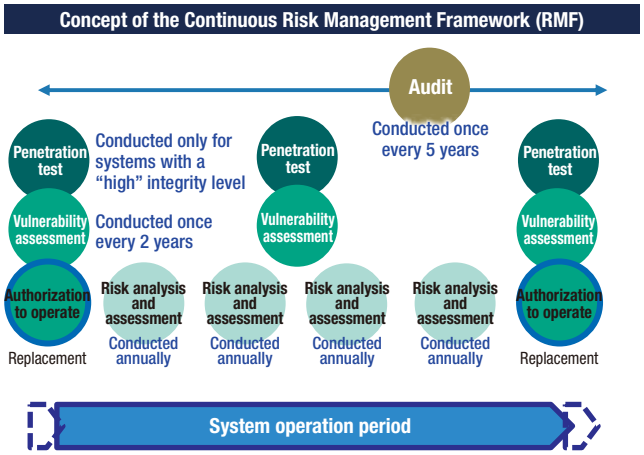
Additionally, the MOD/JSDF will shift away from the traditional mindset that perimeter security[16] is sufficient to maintain the safety of the organization's network, and will promote the introduction of the new security controls based on the "Zero Trust" concept.[17] These will improve the cybersecurity level of the MOD/JSDF and establish a posture that can safeguard information assets against any intrusion into the organization's network.

In order to strengthen the protection posture of information systems, the MOD/JSDF will develop a cloud system that integrates and standardizes the JSDF systems, implement centralized cybersecurity measures, improve defense posture of equipment and facility infrastructure systems, enhance the threat hunting function that continuously hunts for and detects potential internal threats based on the assumption that threats have already penetrated inside the network, and develop the support system by making use of AI to enable rapid situational awareness and response to cyberattacks.

In addition, defense-related companies are upgrading their information systems and implementing other security control measures in accordance with the Standards on Cybersecurity Measures for Defense Industry.

See Fig. III-1-2-11 (Risk Management Framework (image)), Part IV, Chapter 2, Section 1-2-4 (Strengthening Defense Industrial Security)

Fig. III-1-2-11 Risk Management Framework (image)



c. Education and Research

To fundamentally strengthen cyber defense capabilities, it is necessary to develop workforce that possess sophisticated knowledge and skills about cybersecurity, including the expansion of education and the utilization of knowledge from private sectors. In this context, the MOD/JSDF has developed cyber workforce through continuous and by stages assignment to the cyber units that are in charge of responding to cyberattacks, and by providing them with both in-house and external education.

Regarding education, the GSDF System and Signal/Cyber School has provided cybersecurity education as a common program across all JSDF services. Personnel have been dispatched to the U.S. National Defense University's College of Information and Cyberspace International Fellows and the U.S. Army's Coalition Cyber Operations Planner course, and the specialized course in system and cyber engineering has been established at the GSDF High Technical School. At the National Defense Academy, the Department of Information Engineering has been reorganized into the Faculty of Cyber and Information Engineering.

In terms of research, the MOD/JSDF is strengthening the research organization of the Cyber Security Division in the National Institute for Defense Studies and Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency's Future Capabilities

REFERENCE: The MOD/JSDF's "I Want to Know About This!": JSDF Measures against Cyber Attacks
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/press/shiritai/cyber/index.html

16 An approach that involves the installation of defensive devices at the boundary between the internet and the internal network to block unauthorized external communications, while operating the internal network on the assumption that such network is secure. While this approach offers superior efficiency in management and operation, it presents the challenge that once an intrusion into the internal network occurs, the damage can easily spread throughout the organization.

17 The concept of maintaining the safety of the organization's information assets (data, devices, applications, etc.) by dynamically verifying and controlling the authenticity of all access from inside and outside the organization's network, without taking the security inside the network for granted.

Development Center[18] is conducting research into cyber protection technology for equipment systems to prevent the spread of damage caused by cyberattacks and enable various equipment systems to remain in operation in the event of cyberattacks.

(3) Cooperation with Private Companies and Other Countries, and Others

To respond to cyberattacks in a swift and appropriate manner, it is necessary to keep abreast of the latest information, including risks related to cybersecurity, countermeasures and technological trends, through cooperation with private companies, and strategic talks, joint training and other opportunities with our ally and other parties. For this purpose, the MOD/JSDF will effectively cooperate with private companies, and foreign countries, including the United States.

a. Cooperation with Private Companies and Others

Through the Cyber Defense Council (CDC), whose members consist of around ten companies in the defense industry with a strong interest in cybersecurity, we are sharing information among companies in the defense industry, aggregating information, and making efforts to grasp the overall picture of cyberattacks. In addition, joint training with the defense industry is conducted once a year to enhance the cyberattack response capabilities of both the MOD/JSDF and the defense industry.

b. Cooperation with the United States

Japan is committed to further strengthening information sharing and enhancing efforts related to information security and cybersecurity with the United States.

The Cyber Defense Policy Working Group (CDPWG) serves as a framework for policy consultations between defense authorities of the two countries. In this framework, specialized and specific considerations and exchange of views were conducted on a wide range of fields, such as the promotion of cyber policy consultations and closer information sharing.

In the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation (Guidelines) and the CDPWG Joint Statement, the governments of Japan and the United States agreed to establish a prompt and appropriate information sharing structure, protect critical infrastructure essential to ensure mission assurance of the JSDF and U.S. Forces, ensure the resiliency of their respective networks and systems, and organize educational exchanges and conduct joint exercises. In addition, at the Japan-U.S. "2+2" meeting in 2019, Japan and the United States confirmed that international law applied in cyberspace and that a cyberattack could, in certain circumstances, constitute an armed attack under Article V of the Japan-U.S. Treaty. Furthermore, at the Japan-U.S. "2+2" meeting in July 2024 and the Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting in March 2025, the two countries agreed to strengthen cooperation on cybersecurity and Japan's cooperation with the United States is to be further strengthened by such means as participation in the Japan-U.S. Cyber Dialogue, a whole-of-government framework by both nations, continuously holding the Japan-U.S. IT Forum, a framework between defense authorities.

In terms of operational cooperation, cyberattack response capability training has been conducted as part of the Japan-U.S. Bilateral Joint Exercise (field training exercise) and the Japan-U.S.-Australia Trilateral Command Post Exercise to improve Japan-U.S. combined response capabilities.

c. Cooperation with Like-Minded Countries, Etc.

Japan will enhance its partnership and cooperation with like-minded countries and other partners through sharing views on threat awareness, exchanging views on response to cyberattacks, and participating in multilateral exercises.

The MOD has participated in the Japan-NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) Cyber Dialogue, a whole-of-government framework and organized the Japan-NATO Cyber Defense Expert Staff Talks to exchange opinions on various issues related to cyberspace among defense authorities. Besides, the MOD has participated in the International Conference on Cyber Conflict (CyCon) hosted by the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) established in Estonia. The MOD has been dispatching personnel to the CCDCOE since 2019.

In addition, Japan has held cyber dialogues between defense authorities of Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and France. Japan also provides capacity building support in the field of cybersecurity for ASEAN countries.

With the aim of strengthening the JSDF's cyber domain capabilities and cooperation with other countries, Japan has been participating in training and exercises. In FY2025, Japan took part in "Locked Shields 2025," a multilateral cyber defense exercise hosted by CCDCOE in May, as a joint Japan-Australia team. Japan has been an official participant in this exercise since 2021, making this its fifth participation. Japan also participated in "MASAKARI 25," a cyber defense exercise jointly hosted by Japan and Canada in July; "Cyber Coalition," a multilateral cyber defense exercise hosted by NATO from November to December; "Cyber Skills Challenge," a multilateral cyber training hosted



REFERENCE: Important information about cyber security
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/defense/cyber/index.html

18 In October 2024, the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) reorganized the Next-Generation Equipment Research Center to form the Future Capabilities Development Center.

by Australia in December; and "Defense Cyber Marvel 2026," a cyber defense exercise hosted by the United Kingdom in February 2026. Furthermore, in February, the GSDF hosted "Cyber KONGO 2026," a multilateral cyber defense training, with a total of 17 participating countries, including our ally and like-minded countries, to strengthen capabilities in the cyber domain.



Advertisement for Cyber Contest 2026

See Part V, Chapter 2, Section 2-3 (Recruiting the Cyber Workforce)

(4) Points of the FY2026 Budget

The MOD/JSDF has allocated approximately 233.1 billion yen in FY2026 for enhancing capabilities in the cyber domain. Major projects include the enhancement of the cyber defense structure, the implementation of the RMF, protection of information systems, enhancement of education and research functions and promotion of cybersecurity measures in the defense industry.

3 Electromagnetic Spectrum Domain

(1) Basic Concept

Electromagnetic spectrum, used in wireless communications, radars, and other technologies, are being used for a wider range of utilizations and applications across the land, sea, air, space, and cyber domains. Therefore, securing superiority in the electromagnetic spectrum domain is extremely important for strengthening deterrence and executing cross-domain operations.

To this end, the JSDF will strengthen its capabilities in the electromagnetic spectrum domain, including effectively operating its electronic warfare capabilities and related support capabilities while degrading or neutralizing opponents' electronic jamming capabilities and communication in this area even under challenging electromagnetic environments, such as when encountering communication jamming by opponents.[19] In addition, the entire JSDF will utilize the electromagnetic spectrum more efficiently by strengthening its electromagnetic spectrum management functions.

(2) Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF

The MOD/JSDF will closely cooperate with relevant ministries and agencies to strengthen capabilities in the electromagnetic spectrum domain so that the JSDF can use radio waves in a stable and flexible manner while working to strengthen its electronic warfare capabilities and electromagnetic spectrum management functions and balancing civilian use of frequencies with the JSDF's use of frequencies for the command and control and information gathering activities.

See Part I, Chapter 4, Section 3-3 (Trends in Electromagnetic Domain)

a. Enhancement of Electronic Jamming Capabilities (Communications and Radar Jamming Capabilities), etc.

It is extremely effective as a means to disrupt the use of the electromagnetic spectrum, including communications and radar of an opponent that invades Japan, and to degrade or neutralize their operational capabilities, for overcoming a disadvantage of the JSDF in capabilities in other domains.

The GSDF is deploying the Network Electronic Warfare System (NEWS), which gathers and analyzes radio waves information to disrupt the opponent's use of radio waves. In addition, it has begun acquiring the Type-24 Counter Air Electronic Warfare System designed to neutralize the enemy aircraft radar systems. Moreover, research is being conducted on low-power jamming technologies and future electromagnetic pulse (EMP) equipment technologies. The MOD/JSDF will also conduct research on directional energy technologies such as high-energy lasers and high-power microwaves (HPM) to improve the capabilities to deal with small unmanned vehicles.

From FY2026 through FY2027, the MOD/JSDF will conduct research on laser systems to respond against

19 One of the attacks using electromagnetic spectrum is an EMP attack, which generates instantaneous powerful electromagnetic spectrum through nuclear explosions, leading to the malfunction or destruction of electronics. Since this type of attack would impact not just the defense field but Japanese people's lives in general, the Government of Japan as a whole will deliberate on necessary countermeasures against it.

missiles[20] with the aim of providing a low-cost solution for countering not only small, low-speed targets such as drones but also larger, high-speed targets such as cruise missiles.



Network Electronic Warfare System (NEWS)

b. Strengthening of Electronic Protection Capabilities

To execute operations while degrading or neutralizing the effect of adversaries' electronic jamming, the MOD/JSDF is promoting the acquisition of F-35A fighters with superior electronic protection capability and F-35B fighters with their superior electronic protection capability, short takeoff and vertical landing capabilities, and continues to improve the capabilities of F-15 fighters with electronic protection capability.

c. Strengthening of Electronic Warfare Support Capabilities

In order to achieve superiority in the electromagnetic spectrum domain, it is important to gather and analyze electromagnetic spectrum information even in peacetime. The ASDF is promoting the acquisition of the RC-2 signals intelligence aircraft to enhance the capabilities to gather the necessary radio waves jamming and protection. Additionally, the MOD is developing an electronic warfare aircraft.

d. Enhancement of Electromagnetic Spectrum Management Function

To gain an advantage in operation by using electromagnetic spectrum effectively, in addition to improving electronic warfare capabilities, it is necessary to centrally grasp wave frequencies and the usage status, coordinate the use of frequencies, and appropriately allocate frequencies to the JSDF units, etc.

For this reason, the electromagnetic spectrum management function will be strengthened by understanding the electromagnetic spectrum usage status of the JSDF's equipment including communication devices, radars, and electronic warfare devices, etc., and visualizing them on monitors.

e. Human Resources Development and Research

To strengthen the JSDF's capabilities in the electromagnetic spectrum domain and to develop personnel with specialized expertise, efforts are being made to gather the up-to-date knowledge and expertise through various training programs, by dispatching personnel to participate in educational programs on electronic warfare in the United States and other means. In addition, the MOD/JSDF is enhancing resiliency by promoting the diversification of communication networks and conducting various researches in light of the protection against electromagnetic pulses.

(3) Points of the FY2026 Budget

Major projects to enhance capabilities in the electromagnetic spectrum domain in FY2026 include the acquisition of the Type-24 Counter Air Electronic Warfare System to improve communications and radar jamming capabilities, the acquisition of fighter aircraft (F-35A/B) to strengthen electronic protection capabilities, the acquisition of signals intelligence aircraft (RC-2) to enhance electronic warfare support capabilities and research on laser systems to respond against missiles in relation to response to small unmanned vehicle and other platforms. As part of efforts to enhance organizational structure in the electromagnetic spectrum domain, Counter Air Electronic Warfare Units will be established at Camp Kengun (Kumamoto Prefecture) and Camp Yonaguni (Okinawa Prefecture), where the Type-24 Counter Air Electronic Warfare System will be deployed to conduct electronic jamming against the opponent's airborne warning and control systems (AWACS) and neutralize radars.

4 Land, Maritime, and Air Domains

(1) Basic Concept

Land, maritime, and air defense capabilities form the foundation of cross-domain operations. Japan will fundamentally strengthen these forces by steadily developing vessels and aircraft and actively leveraging advanced technologies, while considering the integration of unmanned assets, in order to maintain and enhance maritime superiority[21] and air superiority.[22] To this end, we will promote the acquisition and enhancement of various types of equipment to strengthen our capabilities in the land, maritime, and air domains.

20 Laser systems are expected to be a game-changing technology. The MOD/JSDF aims to establish the necessary elemental technologies by developing prototypes of a new form of beam focusing device that enables highly efficient light transmission, advanced target tracking technology utilizing AI image processing, and technologies related to tracking laser devices capable of detecting targets at greater distances.

21 Maritime superiority refers to the condition in which one side has a tactical advantage over the opposing force at sea and can carry out maritime operations without suffering substantial damages.

22 Air superiority refers to the condition in which one side can carry out airborne operations without suffering a significant level of obstruction by the opposing force.

(2) Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF

The GSDF is advancing the acquisition of equipment such as the Type-10 Main Battle Tank and Type-19 155mm Wheeled Self-Propelled Howitzer. In addition, it will procure the Armored Modular Vehicle (AMV), a personnel carrier developed in Finland, to replace the current Type-96 Wheeled Armored Personnel Carrier. The GSDF will also procure Type-24 Infantry Combat Vehicle, Type-24 120mm Maneuver Mortar Combat Vehicle and Type-25 Reconnaissance and Combat Vehicle. These vehicles are domestically produced and their chassis are communized.

The MSDF will acquire advanced equipment including the new FFM frigate,[23] which features long-range missile capabilities, improved anti-submarine warfare functions, and reduced crew requirements; submarines with improved detection capabilities; supply ships with strengthened logistical support functions; and upgraded P-1 patrol aircraft with enhanced detection and identification capabilities.

The ASDF will acquire F-35A and F-35B fighter jets, and will also carry out upgrades to enhance the capabilities of F-15 and F-2 fighter aircraft.

(3) Points of the FY2026 Budget

The MOD/JSDF has allocated approximately 992.9 billion yen in FY2026 for enhancing capabilities in the land, maritime and air domains. Major projects include planned acquisition by the GSDF of the Type-24 120mm Maneuver Mortar Combat Vehicle, Type-25 Reconnaissance and Combat Vehicle, Type-10 Main Battle Tank, Armored Modular Vehicle (AMV) – Armored Personnel Carrier (APC), along with reorganization of the 15th Brigade into the 15th Division to strengthen the defense posture in the southwestern region.

MSDF's major planned projects include construction of a new FFM, patrol vessels, a submarine and a minesweeper, modification of Izumo-class destroyers and acquisition of fixed-wing patrol aircraft (P-1) and patrol helicopters (SH-60L).

ASDF's major planned projects include the acquisition of fighter aircraft (F-35A/F-35B) and the upgrading of fighter aircraft (F-2).



Type-25 Reconnaissance and Combat Vehicle



New FFM (image)



F-35B deployment ceremony

5 Strengthening of Command-and-Control and Intelligence-related Functions

1 Basic Concept

From peacetime to disasters and contingencies, the information and communication infrastructure serves as the foundation not only for the people's daily lives and socio-economic activities, but also JSDF operations. Furthermore, in recent years, new ways of warfare have emerged, such as the use of AI to analyze vast amounts of data transmitted at high capacity and with low latency in a very short time

23 A new type of destroyer that combines enhanced capabilities for a wide range of missions with a more compact hull design. Its designation combines the frigate hull classification symbol, "FF," with "M," representing "multi-purpose" and "mine."

and apply the results to military operations. Next-generation information and communication technology is attracting attention as the foundation for these developments.

The MOD/JSDF has thus far implemented measures necessary for building systems and networks that are real-time, resilient and flexible, in accordance with the National Defense Strategy (NDS) and other relevant policies. With the recognition that the increased integration of next-generation information and communication technology is essential for fundamentally reinforcing Japan's defense capabilities, the MOD formulated the Next-Generation Information and Communication Strategy of the Ministry of Defense in July 2025. This strategy outlines how the MOD intends to utilize next-generation information and communication technology, taking into account the rapid advancements in recent years. Specifically, by establishing a new Defense Information Infrastructure (tentative name) as the MOD's foundational platform, the strategy aims to facilitate the cross-organizational utilization of various types of data and the flexible development of mission-critical functions for various operations.

As military activities intensify in the vicinity of Japan, it has become more important than ever to establish a seamless information gathering system by appropriately utilizing various means to ensure a seamless response at all phases from peacetime to contingencies. In addition, we are continuously and persistently monitoring military developments in the area surrounding Japan, and we are taking steps to fundamentally

Commentary

Next-Generation Information and Communication Strategy of the Ministry of Defense

In the information and communication technology (ICT) field, rapid advances in technology, driven primarily by the private sector, are making it possible to transmit vast amounts of data in real time, and in turn, process and analyze data through a highly sophisticated system using AI and other tools. In the military domain, countries around the world are adopting ways of warfare that actively incorporate these new ICT. As a result, ensuring superiority in decision-making—the capacity to make decisions more rapidly and accurately than an adversary—has become increasingly important.

For the MOD/JSDF, incorporating innovative civilian technologies in the ICT field is an urgent priority in order to take into account these ways of warfare and achieve new ways of defense. With this pressing issue in mind, the "Next-Generation Information and Communication Strategy of the Ministry of Defense" was formulated in July 2025 to clarify the MOD/JSDF's ICT approach and deepen public-private partnership while enhancing predictability for private-sector companies.

The strategy calls for building a New Defense Information Infrastructure, with a view to developing communications networks and data infrastructure in an integrated manner for achieving decision-making superiority. Specifically, it aims to build a mesh network utilizing a variety of communication pathways, including optical technologies, thereby enabling diverse combinations of sensors and shooters. This approach will allow for flexible operations tailored to the battlespace, as well as a robust network capable of maintaining connectivity even if portions are disrupted. In addition, to build data infrastructure that leverages AI and enables appropriate and prompt processing and analysis of the enormous volumes of data transmitted through these networks, the MOD plans to move beyond the current on-premises-centric infrastructure and transition toward a hybrid cloud that integrates commercial cloud services.

The realization of these initiatives will require cooperation with private-sector companies and other partners. By strengthening defense capabilities using cutting-edge civilian technologies, we also seek to contribute to technological advancement in the civilian sector, creating a virtuous cycle between defense capabilities and economic strength, where civilian technologies support defense capabilities, which will lead to the further reinforcement of defense capabilities.



Conceptual image of the New Defense Information Infrastructure architecture

strengthen our intelligence functions so that we can respond to information warfare, including operations in the cognitive dimension, as seen in Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

2 Command and Control Functions

The MOD/JSDF will strengthen its command and control functions by securing its ability to share information in real time through resilient networks in order to ensure rapid and reliable command and control. For this reason, the MOD/JSDF is proceeding with the development of the MOD Cloud, which integrates the data infrastructure of each JSDF service, to serve as the foundation for systems used to transmit command and control orders and share information for JSDF operations, in addition to the development of the Defense Information Infrastructure (DII). In this context, it is essential to ensure the system's resiliency so that it can continue to be used even in the event of an armed attack situation or a disaster. Therefore, we plan to utilize cloud technology to virtually integrate and utilize information, while developing and physically distributing the hardware that supports this technology.

3 Information-related Functions, including Responses to Integrated Information Warfare

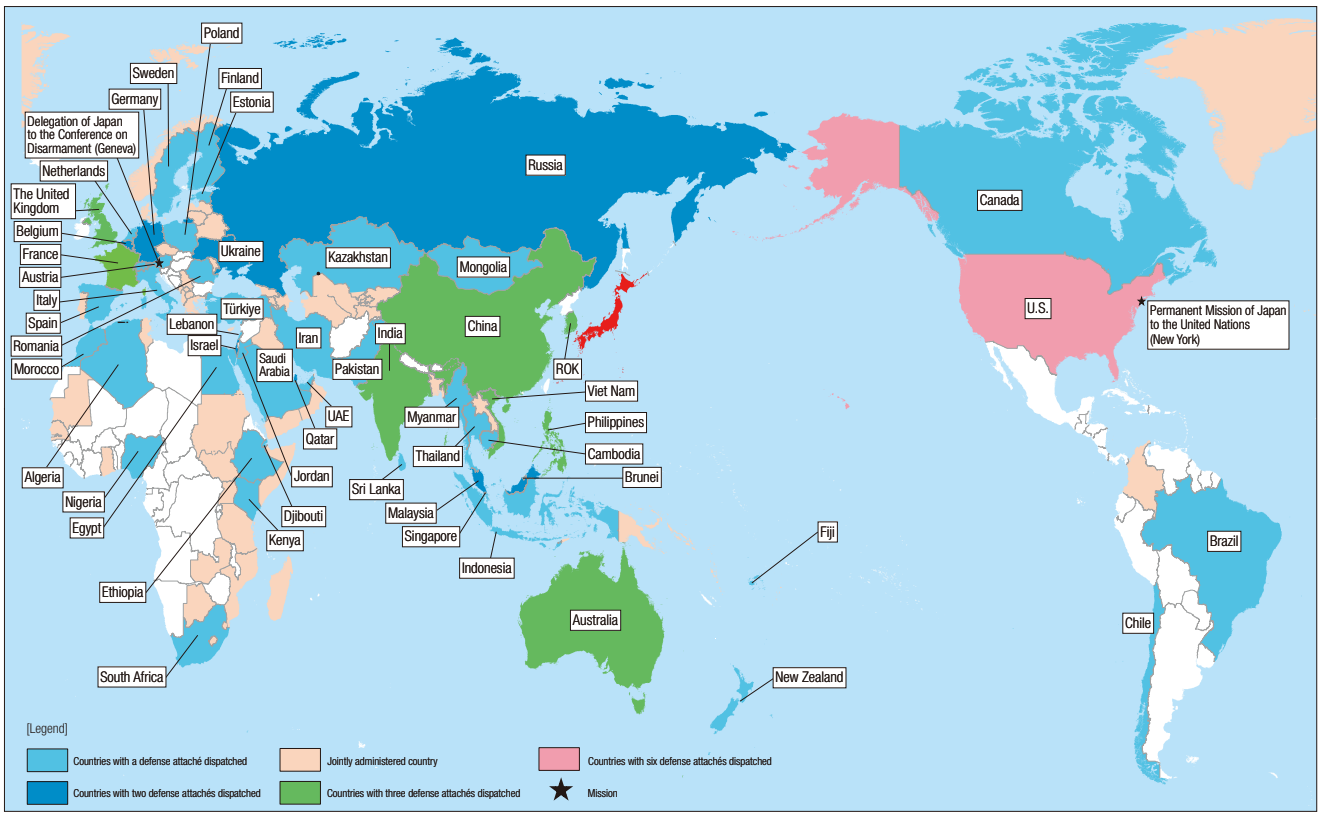
(1) Strengthening of Functions Such as Information Gathering and Analysis

a. Strengthening Capability to Gather and Analyze Military Information

With security environment changing in a rapid and complex manner, high-quality and timely information gathering and analysis are essential for the Government to conduct accurate decision-making. Due to the rapid changes in international affairs and the increased activity of military operations near Japan, the MOD/JSDF plans to establish a seamless information gathering system by appropriately utilizing various resources.

The MOD/JSDF constantly gathers information quickly and accurately on a daily basis by using various methods. Examples: (1) gathering, processing, and analyzing military communication signals and signals emanating from electronic weapons coming to Japanese airspace; (2) gathering, processing, and analyzing satellite imageries; (3) warning and surveillance activities by ships, aircraft and other assets; (4) gathering and organizing a variety of open-source

Fig. III-1-2-12 Dispatched Defense Attachés (image)



intelligence (OSINT); (5) information exchanges with defense organizations of other nations; and (6) information gathering by defense attachés dispatched abroad and others.

In addition to strengthening the deployment framework for defense attachés, the MOD is also working to improve the support system for these personnel. This includes improving and reinforcing pre-deployment training to enable effective information gathering activities in their assigned countries, securing career paths, and strengthening the overall information gathering cycle through the accumulation of relevant information and other measures. In FY2025, one defense attaché was newly dispatched to each of Fiji and Brunei, and an additional attaché was assigned to each of the Philippines and France. In FY2026, an additional attaché will be assigned to each of the United States, Indonesia and Türkiye, bringing the total number of defense attachés to 86.

In addition, we will strengthen our intelligence analysis capabilities and associated functions by improving the information systems of the Defense Intelligence Headquarters as well as the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF; maintaining and upgrading various information gathering assets (equipment) and the information gathering devices used at communication stations and coastal surveillance units; and gathering and organizing various types of intelligence materials.

Furthermore, to enable the intelligence sector to respond effectively to increasingly diverse needs, we will work to secure and develop highly capable personnel for information gathering and analysis. Comprehensive measures will be steadily implemented in areas such as recruitment, education and training, and personnel assignments, in order to strengthen information gathering and analysis functions in an integrated manner. Moreover, we will promote cooperation and coordination with relevant domestic intelligence agencies. Additionally, the MOD/JSDF will take necessary measures to utilize information gathered by Information Gathering Satellites operated by the Cabinet Satellite Intelligence Center (CSICE) and other assets more effectively for its operations.

See Fig. III-1-2-12 (Dispatched Defense Attachés (image))

Commentary

Defense Attachés Working in Countries around the World

Defense attachés are stationed in Japanese embassies and other diplomatic missions and delegations around the world to gather military information and carry out other operations. In recent years, defense attachés have been covering a wide range of operations, such as defense exchanges with countries of their assignment, coordination on defense equipment and technology cooperation, and arrangements for receiving Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) aircraft for missions and activities. Their roles are expanding year by year.

The security environment surrounding Japan is changing at a remarkable pace. In order to ensure the defense of Japan in this security environment, constant gathering of information is essential. Furthermore, it is necessary to make consistent effort to strengthen cooperation with countries that share our values, and with countries we should align our values with in the future.

Therefore, the MOD has been enhancing its defense attachés dispatch structure. Recently, the MOD has newly dispatched/increased defense attachés to/in Africa, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and regions along the coast of the South China Sea. Currently, a total of 83 defense attachés are dispatched to 54 embassies and 2 missions (about 1.7 times as many compared to 49 defense attachés in FY2013).

When various emergencies arise in the places of assignment, international disaster relief activities or the transportation of overseas Japanese nationals may be anticipated. In such cases, timely information provided by defense attachés, such as information on local conditions or the assessments of military attachés of other countries, serves as a valuable source of information that is very difficult to obtain through other channels.



Officials from the MOD at a reception in the Embassy of Japan in the United States of America

VOICE

Defense Attachés Working in Countries around the World

IYONO Minako, Lieutenant Colonel (GSDF), Defense Attaché to Estonia

Since assuming my post as Japan's first defense attaché to Estonia, I have enjoyed heartwarming exchanges with Estonian defense officials and feel that the bonds between our two countries have steadily grown stronger with each passing day.

Estonia, the northernmost of the three Baltic states and a digitally advanced nation, plays a leading role in multilateral cybersecurity cooperation. Drawing upon my experience as a cyber unit commander, I am working to advance defense cooperation between our two countries. In Estonia, which shares a direct border with Russia, airspace violations and cross-border incidents never cease, and this has created strong vigilance toward Russian aggression. I have observed firsthand the activities of the Estonian Defence League, in which defense conscious citizens conduct national defense. I have also seen the installation of the "Baltic Defence Line" that includes 600 fortified defensive positions, as well as the building of the "Drone Wall." These experiences have renewed my resolve to fulfill my mission.

The Estonian people regard the situation in Ukraine as their own matter. Their attempt to confront Russia with ingenuity and advanced technology while adapting to the rapidly changing battlefield is both highly inspiring and instructive for me, an engineering officer engaged in research and development.

With gratitude for the tremendous support of my husband, a Ground Self-Defense Force personnel who is taking spouse-accompaniment leave, and for our three children's healthy growth in this country, I remain committed to my mission, determined to apply the insights I gained at the forefront to strengthen Japan's security.



The author observing a multilateral exercise with NATO

WATANABE Naoto, Captain (MSDF), Defense Attaché to Russia

I was assigned to Moscow in January 2025, nearly three years after the start of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Here in Moscow, I observe the developments in Russia, a vast nation that borders both Japan and Europe, and witness firsthand particularly the actions of Russia and the international community surrounding the aggression against Ukraine. I am reminded daily of the complex and severe realities of the international situation. Contrary to reports of extensive damage across Ukraine resulting from Russian UAV and missile strikes, the damage within Russia is concentrated in areas near the Ukrainian border. While there have been occasional instances of UAVs reaching the vicinity of Moscow, the situation in the Russian capital is generally stable. In the aggression against Ukraine, the nature of the battlefield has transformed dramatically through the evolution of unmanned assets, which has profoundly impacted military developments around the world. As Russia continues its aggression, it has pursued improvements in strategic weapons capabilities and the development of new weapons, including hypersonic missiles. Against the backdrop of melting Arctic sea ice, Russia has also been actively promoting the development of the Northern Sea Route. A defense attaché's role extends beyond gathering and analyzing information on the military activities of the host nation. It also includes facilitating communication between the two countries to prevent unexpected circumstances. Defense attachés have a significant role to play in a challenging environment, and I will continue to carry out my mission with a strong sense of vigilance.



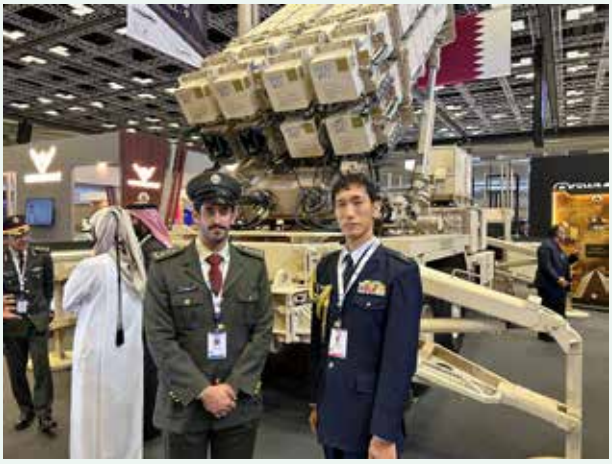
A photo with naval attachés (the author is second from the right)

TATSUKAWA Ryo, Colonel (ASDF), Defense Attaché to Qatar

Last year, Qatar's Al Udeid Air Base, located approximately 50 kilometers west of Doha, the capital, was attacked by Iran in June, and a Hamas office in central Doha was attacked by Israel in September. In late February of this year, Qatar once again came under attack, causing damage across a wider area than before. Qatar is facing the most unprecedented security challenge since gaining independence and statehood in 1971.

I assumed my post in 2023 as Japan's first resident defense attaché to Qatar, which had been concurrently served by the defense attaché to Kuwait. As the Middle East situation evolves rapidly, I gather information that can be collected only locally. Through our Military to Military (MM) Dialogue as a key milestone, I can truly feel that Japan's defense exchanges with the Qatar Armed Forces are expanding both in quality and quantity.

While there may be differences in our organizational culture and approaches, repeated visits, exchanges, and discussions have deepened mutual understanding with the Qatar Armed Forces, and possible areas of cooperation have gradually become clearer. Moving forward, I will continue to do my best and strive to further strengthen our defense cooperative relationship.



In front of a Patriot missile once launched by the Qatar Armed Forces in response to an Iranian attack

b. Defense Intelligence Headquarters

The Defense Intelligence Headquarters (DIH) is the central intelligence agency of the MOD and the largest intelligence organization in Japan. The DIH gathers various intelligence and analyzes international and military situations and other matters related to Japan's swiftly changing security environment.

In addition to information gathering and analysis, the DIH is also considered in the NDS to play a central role in responding to integrated information warfare for the defense of Japan and is to fundamentally strengthen the capabilities to gather and analyze information on international military situations and other issues.

The DIH is an organization consisting of the uniformed JSDF personnel from GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF and administrative and technical officials (specialized in language, technology, administration or general office work). The JSDF personnel use the experience and knowledge gained in their own unit, etc., whereas administrative/technical officials use their expert knowledge in language, technology and other fields, to work together for their mission. Specifically, they conduct comprehensive analysis from diverse perspectives, including military, political, and economic factors, based on information received from a wide range of sources including SIGINT, IMINT, GIOINT, OSINT (newspapers, internet, etc.) and opinion exchange with relevant parties.

The DIH is also strengthening information gathering and analyzing functions in space, cyberspace and electromagnetic spectrum domains. For example, it conducts the gathering and analysis of necessary information regarding trends in threats in cyberspace through such means as gathering OSINT and exchanging information with other countries.

Results of the DIH's intelligence service are provided as analysis products to the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister, the National Security Secretariat established within the Cabinet Secretariat, the Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office, as well as GSDF, MSDF and ASDF units in a timely and appropriate manner to support policy decision and unit operation. The DIH also actively exchanges information with relevant ministries and agencies and foreign counterparts.

c. Initiatives for Information Security

The MOD/JSDF has been working to ensure a system necessary for information security in accordance with the Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets[24] and other relevant laws, in cooperation with relevant ministries, agencies and bureaus, to appropriately protect various types of classified information.

However, in December 2022, the MOD announced the incident where the then Commander of the MSDF Fleet Intelligence Command intentionally disclosed specially designated secrets and other information without authorization to his then superior, who was not eligible to handle classified information. In April, July and December 2024 and December 2025, the MOD announced information security incidents including the incident where personnel who had not undergone the security clearance assessment for handling specially designated secrets were designated as personnel with eligible access and allowed to actually handle such classified information.

24 Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets

In response to a series of incidents, the MOD is steadily implementing a range of recurrence-prevention measures formulated in December 2024, including "exploring the ideal approach to information security in a manner aligned with the realities of unit operations," "enhancing awareness of information security and fundamentally improving information security education," and "introducing a comprehensive information security operation protection system (tentative name)[25] to minimize human error," while also working to further increase awareness of a helpdesk available for inquiry on information security matters.

Through these initiatives, the MOD/JSDF is committed to fundamentally reform the approach to and framework for information security, and is making effort across the organization to foster an organizational culture that ensures strict compliance with laws and regulations.

See Fig. III-1-2-13 (Recurrence Prevention Measures for Specified Secret Leaks and Related Incidents)

(2) Responding to Integrated Information Warfare with Special Regard to the Cognitive Dimension

a. Integrated Information Warfare with Special Regard to the Cognitive Dimension

Information warfare in the international community begins even before the outbreak of conflict, as it aims to shape a favorable security environment by influencing people's perception through disinformation and strategic messaging, thereby affecting public opinion and decision-making in other countries, while also preventing external influence on one's own decision-making. In light of this situation, Japan will build a system and posture that can reliably deal with integrated information warfare with special regard to the cognitive dimension.

See Part I, Chapter 4, Section 3-5 (Trends in the Cognitive Dimension)

Fig. III-1-2-13 Recurrence Prevention Measures for Specified Secret Leaks and Related Incidents

Reconstruction of Recurrence Prevention Measures

○ A comprehensive analysis of past incidents involving the leakage of specified secrets has revealed the following causes.
(1) Inconsistencies between actual unit operations and information security measures
(2) Issues in the current approach to information security education, such as being overly generalized and uniform
(3) Inadequate implementation and insufficient utilization of the system
(4) Lack of countermeasures against human error in field-level security operations
(5) Deficiencies in the information security management structure within the Ministry of Defense

○ Given the frequent occurrence of incidents involving the protection of specified secrets within the Ministry of Defense, an investigation was conducted based on the recognition that past recurrence prevention measures may have been superficial and failed to address the fundamental issues. Based on the results of the investigation, truly effective measures were developed in formulating the recurrence prevention plan.

(1) Review Information Protection Approaches Reflecting Actual Operational Practices
A review was conducted to determine whether information security measures were misaligned with actual unit activities, and institutional reforms were implemented accordingly.

(2) Improvement of Information Protection Awareness and Comprehensive Overhaul of Training Programs
Comprehensive information protection training aligned with each participant's skill level and position, reinforced by follow-up evaluations such as confirmation tests.

(3) Improvement of the Operation of Existing Systems and Revision of the Information Security Framework
Promptly conduct suitability assessments for personnel handling specified secrets to ensure appropriate designation, while also improving the operation of periodic inspections and related procedures.

(4) Minimizing Human Error by Introducing the Comprehensive Secret Protection System (Tentative Name)
A system for centralized oversight of suitability assessments will be partially implemented during the current fiscal year to prevent the designation of unassessed personnel as specified secret-handling officials.

(5) Enhancement of the information security management structure within the Ministry of Defense
Strengthen the organizational framework through measures such as establishing a new Counsellor position within the Minister's Secretariat, assigning security oversight duties to the Minister's Secretariat Chief Record Officer, and setting up an external expert panel meeting.

(6) Response Measures in Case of a Specified Secret Breach or Related Incident
Codify fundamental measures to prevent additional leakage when a potential incident involving the unauthorized disclosure of a specified secret is identified. In the event of a leakage incident, a prompt report shall be submitted to the Commission for the Oversight of Information Protection of both the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors. The incident must also be publicly disclosed.

25 A system that centrally manages data on personal security clearance assessment applications and registrations, access records to security areas, and access logs to classified documents

b. Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF

With the increasingly severe security environment and the rapid progress of technological innovation, including information technology (IT), it is important to achieve uniquely Japanese new ways of defense based on "new ways of warfare," including integrated information warfare with special regard to the cognitive dimension. In particular, considering Japan's national defense in light of the situation involving Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the conflict between Israel and Palestinian armed groups, it is urgent to enhance our response to integrated information warfare with special regard to the cognitive dimension. This includes the ability to detect and analyze disinformation, as well as to swiftly and strategically disseminate appropriate information.

In line with the MOD/JSDF's policy to develop information capabilities that can reliably respond to integrated information warfare with special regard to the cognitive dimension by 2027, the GSDF Information Operations Command and the MSDF Information Warfare Command were established in FY2025. In addition, the MOD/JSDF is taking the necessary measures at every stage of information collection, analysis, and dissemination. These measures include the promotion of the establishment of functions for automatically gathering information from social media and other sources to assess the authenticity of information provided by various countries, while policy, operational and intelligence divisions are working in close coordination with each other.

Moreover, we will strive to further strengthen Japan's capabilities in light of trends in the international community by sharing information and conducting joint training with our ally, like-minded countries, and others.

In addition to the various measures mentioned above, to ensure that JSDF personnel, who are the core element of our defense capability, are not misled by disinformation and prevented from making appropriate decisions and taking precise actions, each personnel member must understand the dangers of disinformation and develop an attitude that enables them to calmly perceive and objectively analyze matters on a daily basis. To that end, efforts will be made to further strengthen the organizational structure to execute information security related duties by promoting the acquisition of necessary competencies and improving cyber and media literacy through educational opportunities and other means. Additionally, the MOD/JSDF will work to disseminate accurate information by, for example, publicly disclosing certain cases of disinformation about them originating from foreign sources.

See Section 1-2-5 (Responses to Integrated Information Warfare with Special Regard to the Cognitive Dimension)



Establishment ceremony for the Information Operations Unit (March 2026)

4 Points of the FY2026 Budget

The MOD/JSDF has allocated approximately 516.6 billion yen in FY2026 for enhancing command-and-control and intelligence-related functions. Major projects include planned demonstration tests toward the establishment of a new Defense Information Infrastructure (tentative name) as the foundational platform that actively utilizes information processing technology, quantum-related technology, AI technology and other next-generation information and communication technologies, as part of efforts to develop information systems to secure decision-making superiority. Other projects include the acquisition of RC-2 to continuously and persistently gather information on military developments in the vicinity of Japan and process and analyze such information as well as the acquisition of satellite imagery data to gather information on the situation in the area surrounding Japan.

6 Strengthening of Mobile Deployment Capabilities and Initiatives on Civil Protection

1 Basic Concept

Due to Japan's geographical characteristics, such as being surrounded by the sea, having a long coastline, and having many remote islands separated from the mainland, it is necessary for not only the units regularly stationed in the region to respond in the event of an invasion, but also for additional necessary forces (such as personnel, equipment, and supplies) to be rapidly and flexibly deployed, depending on the situation, in order to prevent the approach and landing of invading forces.

To this end, the MOD/JSDF will enhance mobile deployment capabilities by reinforcing the JSDF's own maritime and air transportation capabilities, and also maximizing its use of civilian transportation capabilities, including Private Finance

Initiatives (PFI).

In addition to strengthening mobile deployment capabilities, since it is essential to maintain a posture that allows for a swift response in the event of an invasion of Japan, the MOD/JSDF will reinforce its defense architecture by deploying necessary units especially in the southwestern region. Moreover, to facilitate smoother transportation and resupply operations by the JSDF, efforts are being made to reinforce the integrated logistics and supply systems, as well as actively promoting the expansion of usable airports and seaports, especially in the southwestern region where many remote islands are concentrated, and improving supply depots across the country.

Furthermore, the JSDF will contribute to civil protection by using their enhanced mobile deployment capabilities to evacuate residents.

See Section 3-2 (Public Infrastructure Development)

2 Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF

(1) Strengthening of Mobile Deployment Capabilities

The MOD/JSDF will ensure the ability to deploy rapidly and at scale while cooperating with civilian transportation capabilities in peacetime, and will strengthen integrated transport capabilities including maritime and air transport capabilities. To this end, in addition to promoting the acquisition of various transport assets for the JSDF, we will secure PFI vessels specialized in the bulk transport of vehicles and containers to supplement our maritime transport capabilities. Regarding PFI vessels, two passenger ships are scheduled to begin

VOICE

MSDF Personnel on Duty at Sea / GSDF Personnel Serving with the Self-Defense Forces Maritime Transport Group

MATSUMURA Kazuhiko, Lieutenant Commander (MSDF), LSV Yoko Commanding Officer, Maritime Transport Group (Kure)

"Yoko" entered service in May 2025, two months after the establishment of the Maritime Transport Group. Smoothly operating a new-concept vessel is challenging even for Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) personnel. Whenever we encountered an issue, the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) and MSDF personnel joined hands and found solutions by combining their diverse perspectives and strengths. I believe they developed strong mutual trust in this process. In addition, with guidance and work-up training from commissioning to the present, the personnel's ability to conduct transport missions has steadily improved. For me, working alongside personnel from another service has been an outstanding experience.



The author (left) directing GSDF personnel by a bridge

IWATA Shintaro, Major (GSDF), Navigator and Executive Officer, Maritime Transport Group (Kure)

This vessel entered service at the end of May 2025. The crew, composed primarily of Ground Self-Defense Force personnel, were brought together from various units across Japan several years prior to commissioning and initially served aboard Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) vessels. Following commissioning, the crew underwent familiarization and work-up training under the guidance and mentorship of MSDF crew and enhanced their professional skills required for shipboard duty. Although the crew members come from diverse occupational and unit backgrounds as well as service experiences, they share a strong willingness to take on new challenges. To ensure completion of the various transportation missions, we will continue to devote ourselves to training to turn this unit into a fully operational force.



Maneuvering by a bridge

operation in January 2026. Additionally, four cargo ships and other vessels will be secured in FY2025, and two container ships will be secured in FY2026, establishing a fleet of eight vessels.

Furthermore, in March 2025, the Self-Defense Forces Maritime Transport Group was established as a joint unit of the GSDF, MSDF and ASDF. The transport vessel JS Nihonbare was deployed that same month, followed by the transport vessel JS Yoko in May of the same year, and the transport vessels JS Amatsusora and JS Aozora in March 2026.



MSDF flag presentation ceremony for the transport vessels JS Amatsusora and JS Aozora (March 2026)

(2) Strengthening Defense Posture, including in Southwestern Region

The MOD/JSDF have been advancing the deployment of units to Kyushu and the southwestern region to bolster the defense posture in the southwestern region. The GSDF established new camps on Yonagunijima Island, Miyakojima Island and Ishigakijima Island (all of them in Okinawa Prefecture) and Amami Oshima Island (Kagoshima Prefecture) and deployed units such as coastal surveillance units, area security units, surface-to-ship guided missile units, and surface-to-air guided missile units.

To build an integrated operational structure between the Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade, located in areas including Sasebo City in Nagasaki Prefecture, and the V-22 Osprey, the GSDF newly established Camp Saga, adjacent to Saga Airport in August 2025 and relocated the air transport squadron, which operates the Osprey temporarily stationed at Camp Kisarazu in Chiba Prefecture, to the new camp. In addition, the ASDF deployed the F-35B to Nyutabaru Air Base (Miyazaki Prefecture) in August of the same year.

Going forward, in order to strengthen the defense posture in the southwestern region, the GSDF plans to reorganize the 15th Brigade, located in Okinawa Prefecture, into a division, and to establish new branch supply depots in the region.

The ASDF is moving forward with the deployment of a mobile warning and control radar to Kitadaitojima Island in Okinawa Prefecture to build a seamless information gathering, and warning and surveillance posture on remote islands in the Pacific. In order to strengthen its warning and surveillance posture in the airspace surrounding the Nansei Islands, the ASDF plans to establish a warning group at Amamioshima Sub Base in FY2027.

These efforts to strengthen defense capabilities in the southwestern region demonstrate Japan's resolve not to tolerate any unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts. By enhancing our deterrence and response capabilities against attacks on the southwestern region, including remote islands, we can reduce the likelihood of an attack on Japan itself, thereby contributing to the safety and security of the people, including those in the southwestern region.

With regard to areas other than the southwestern region, in FY2025, the GSDF reorganized the Ground Material Control Command into the Ground Material Command to centrally command and control all supply depots. This is intended to strengthen the logistics support system, including transportation. The GSDF also abolished the Ordnance School, the Quartermaster School, and the Transport and Logistics School, and established the Logistics School. In addition, the MSDF established a new Fleet Surface Force to centrally command and control surface vessel units such as the Fleet Escort Force and the Mine Warfare Force.



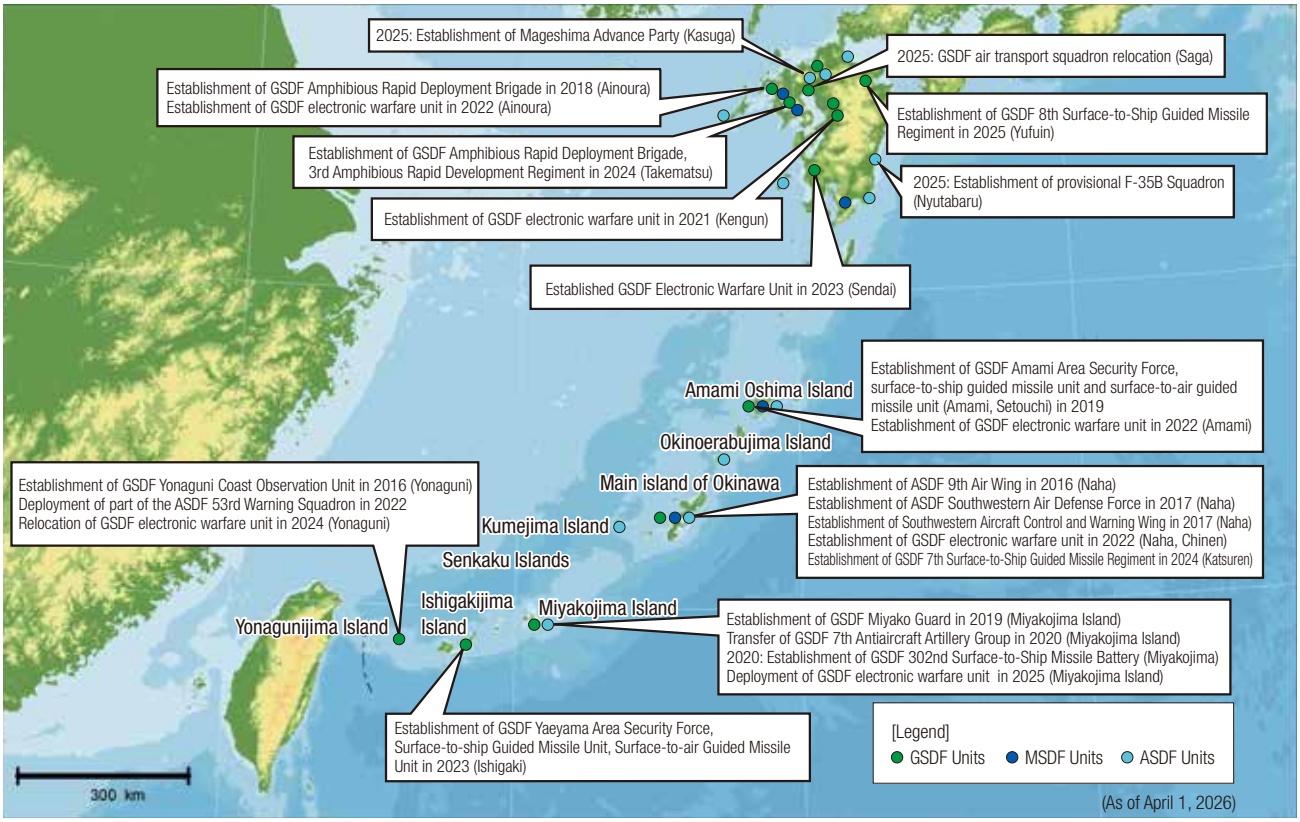
Establishment of GSDF Camp Saga (July 2025)



Operations aboard the Fleet Surface Force (March 2026)

See Fig. III-1-2-14 (Establishment Status of Major Units in Kyushu/Southwestern Region (since 2016))

Fig. III-1-2-14 Establishment Status of Major Units in Kyushu/Southwestern Region (since 2016)



(3) Efforts on Civil Protection

a. Government Initiatives

There has been heightened public interest in civil protection efforts and expectations for the role of the MOD/JSDF, due to repeated launches of ballistic missiles by North Korea, especially with the issuance of J-Alerts in response to ballistic missiles flying over the Japanese archipelago. Since civil protection is positioned as one of the pillars of fundamental reinforcement of defense capabilities in the NDS, the MOD/JSDF is actively working on it.

The Basic Guidelines for Protection categorize potential armed attack scenarios into four types: (1) amphibious invasions, (2) attacks by guerrillas or special forces, (3) ballistic missile attacks, and (4) air strikes, and lays out points to consider when implementing civil protection measures appropriate to each type.

Furthermore, the government as a whole is pushing ahead with efforts to secure evacuation facilities equipped with the necessary functions to protect the lives and physical safety of residents in armed attack situations, such as a ballistic missile attack. This is not only a measure to prevent damage, but also a deterrent against ballistic missile and other attacks. In March 2024, the Government of Japan announced its basic approach to securing necessary evacuation facilities, including the establishment of "Designated Temporary Evacuation Facilities"[26] that can be used for a certain period of time as robust evacuation facilities in areas where evacuation would be difficult due to significant transportation constraints and the remoteness of evacuation destinations. It also formulated the "Technical Guideline for Designated Temporary Evacuation Facilities" that specify the technical specifications that such facilities should meet. In March 2026, the Government formulated the "Basic Policy on Securing Evacuation Facilities (Shelters) in Preparation for Emergencies" as a policy initiative that builds upon and advances the basic approach, with the aim of enhancing the nation's overall resilience to a higher

26 For municipalities that meet the following two requirements: (1) If a wide-area evacuation of residents and others were necessary, it would prove difficult given that the means of transportation for wide-area evacuation of residents would be limited to aircraft or ships and the evacuation destination area is located on a remote island where evacuation beyond the coastal zone is necessary when transporting by ship due to the long distance; and (2) the patterns of evacuation implementation guidelines for wide-area evacuation of all residents, etc., have been prepared and publicized and utilizing said patterns, central and prefectural governments have conducted joint civil protection exercises, such municipalities are supposed to prepare evacuation facilities in the basement of public/official facilities (used for purposes other than evacuation facilities such as meeting rooms, parking lots, etc. during normal times) with financial support from the government of Japan.

standard and strengthening the civil protection system while improving its effectiveness.

To counter invasions while protecting the lives of Japanese citizens in the event of an armed attack or similar situations, national government agencies, local governments, public institutions and private sector companies must cooperate and work together in an integrated manner.

In order to promptly evacuate residents, including those in the southwestern region, well in advance of an armed attack, the Government plans to take measures such as promptly formulating plans for smooth evacuation, securing public and private transportation, maintaining and coordinating the use of public infrastructure such as airports and seaports, securing various types of evacuation facilities and coordinating with international organizations. In addition, to enhance the effectiveness of such efforts, the Government will conduct and verify various types of training, including evacuation of residents and consider necessary measures including institutional reforms, while promoting cooperation among the national government, local governments, designated public institutions and others.

In addition to participating in and cooperating with these initiatives, the MOD/JSDF will also coordinate and cooperate for the organized implementation of civil protection measures using civilian vessels and aircraft used by the JSDF and other JSDF transport assets. The MOD/JSDF is also promoting various measures such as strengthening JSDF units and leveraging JSDF reserve personnel so that it will be able to cooperate for civil protection.

See Fig. III-1-2-15 (Actions in Case of Missiles Flying to Japan (leaflet))

Fig. III-1-2-15 Actions in Case of Missiles Flying to Japan (leaflet)



b. Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF

The MOD/JSDF is to work on civil protection with various relevant ministries and agencies, including the police, fire departments, and the Japan Coast Guard, to support damage assessments, rescue lives, and assist in the evacuation of residents.

To ensure the accurate and prompt implementation of civil protection measures, it is essential to establish coordination frameworks with relevant organizations from peacetime. Accordingly, the MOD/JSDF will continue to strengthen their cooperation with local governments and other stakeholders. In addition, the government as a whole will enhance civil protection exercises with a focus on armed attack situations and other situations.

Specifically, in order to cooperate with local governments and other organizations, the MOD/JSDF established departments responsible for close communication at the major Headquarters and Commands, as well as the Provincial

Cooperation Offices and assigned the Assistant Directors for Civil Protection (civilian officials) there.

Civil protection councils are established in prefectural and municipal governments for comprehensive implementation of civil protection measures, with members appointed from the JSDF and Regional Defense Bureaus. Moreover, local governments are hiring retired JSDF personnel as crisis managers. These managers coordinate with the MOD/JSDF, as well as plan and implement civil protection trainings.

Furthermore, the MOD/JSDF in cooperation with relevant ministries and agencies, organizes civil protection training with local governments and other entities. It also actively participates in and contributes to ones conducted by those ministries, agencies, and local governments.

In addition to these efforts, based on the Basic Policy on Securing Evacuation Facilities (Shelters) in Preparation for Emergencies, the MOD/JSDF supports the development of "Designated Temporary Evacuation Facilities," which are established in consideration of the difficulties of evacuation due to the islands' remote location and other factors, in Yonaguni Town, Ishigaki City, and Miyakojima City, where defense facilities are located.



Civil protection training in Niigata Prefecture (October 2025)

See Reference 19 (Participation of the MOD/JSDF in Civil Protection Joint Training Exercises with Central and Local Government Bodies (FY2025))

3 Points of the FY2026 Budget

The MOD/JSDF has allocated approximately 192.4 billion yen in FY2026 for enhancing mobile deployment and civil protection capabilities. Major projects include advancing the acquisition of aerial refueling and transport aircraft (KC-46A) and the acquisition of utility helicopters (UH-2) and other mobile deployment transport assets, along with the utilization of civilian maritime transport capabilities.

7 Strengthening Sustainability and Resiliency

1 Basic Concept

The MOD/JSDF has identified ensuring sustainability and resiliency as one of its top priorities. This includes accelerating efforts to secure sufficient ammunition and fuel, increasing the number of operationally available equipment, and improving the resiliency of defense facilities. The quantities of ammunition and fuel, as well as the number of operationally available equipment, are key indicators of the JSDF's sustained operational capability to repel enemy attacks and invasions and continue fighting with resilience. However, the JSDF's current sustained operational capability is not necessarily sufficient. Therefore, the MOD/JSDF will promptly increase its ammunition production capacity and establish ammunition depots to ensure an ample ammunition stockpile, as well as an adequate fuel supply. Furthermore, a framework will be promptly established to ensure that all equipment, except equipment undergoing scheduled maintenance, remains in operational condition.

Furthermore, measures will be taken to ensure the safety of JSDF personnel and prevent the loss of operational capability in wartime. These measures include relocating major command centers underground, reinforcing their structures, securing adequate separation distances between facilities, and consolidating facilities. Additionally, efforts will be made to improve barracks and housing and address aging infrastructure. The MOD/JSDF makes efforts for maintenance and renovation of barracks and lodgings. In addition, we will enhance resiliency by implementing concealment and deception measures for equipment, and promote the strengthening of facilities and infrastructure against disasters such as tsunamis.



Equipment concealment and deception

2 Securing Ammunition

The JSDF has various types of ammunition, including rifle and handgun bullets, tank and artillery shells, and missiles for fighter aircraft and naval vessels.

However, advancement of performance and technologies of ammunition has been causing cost increase, which negatively affect securing sufficient ammunition in recent years. Additionally, when certain companies withdrew from the ammunition manufacturing business due to factors such as a decline in orders, replacement manufacturers took over production. However, this initially resulted in longer production times and increased manufacturing costs, further complicating the process of securing the necessary ammunition.

In addition to the time-consuming process of constructing ammunition depots, there is also the issue of insufficient capacity in existing depots due to the increasing size of missiles and other munitions.

The NDS, taking these circumstances into account, sets the goal of resolving the ammunition shortage by FY2027. The MOD/JSDF began the acquisition of Upgraded Type-12 SSM as high-priority stand-off missiles in FY2023. In addition, the acquisition of Tomahawk missiles began in FY2025, one year ahead of the original plan. Along with early procurement of the necessary number of missiles to strengthen our integrated air and missile defense capabilities at an early stage, we will also secure the necessary quantities of bullets, artillery shells and other missiles at an early stage.

Additionally, to ensure the timely and stable supply of ammunition, the MOD will support the expansion of domestic production capacity by the defense industry, including ammunition manufacturers. Furthermore, to accommodate the growing size of ammunition and ensure adequate storage, the Ministry will promote the construction of additional ammunition depots and the disposal of obsolete ammunition.

See Fig. III-1-2-16 (Primary Missile and Magazines), 1 (Strengthening of Stand-off Defense Capabilities)

Fig. III-1-2-16 Primary Missile and Magazines


BMD missile
(SM-3 Block IIA)


SM-6


Intermediate-range multi-mission missiles


Type 03 Medium-Range
SAM (modified)


Type-25 Surface-to-Ship
Guided Missile


Type-23 ship-to-air guided missile
(image)


Type-23 air-to-ship guided missile
(image)


PAC-3MSE


Magazine (an example)


AIM-120 (image)


AAM-4B (image)

3 Securing Fuel

In order to quickly and stably secure the necessary amount of fuel for the operations and actions taken by the JSDF, the MOD/JSDF will build and rent fuel tanks from the private sector. For instance, the MSDF is developing fuel tanks in phases based on criteria such as fuel usage records and existing tank capacity. To support securing fuel for naval vessels, the MSDF will also lease civilian fuel tanks capable of storing and handling fuel year-round.

4 Improving the Operational Availability of Equipment

(1) Current Status of the Operational Availability of Equipment

JSDF equipment is generally used in harsher conditions than commercial products, and as such, it requires frequent maintenance and parts replacement. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain a certain quantity of spare parts.

On the other hand, as equipment has become more advanced in performance, the unit cost of parts procurement and the cost of maintenance have risen. While the maintenance budget has also increased, these increases have not always been sufficient, resulting in equipment becoming non-operable due to parts shortages. For some equipment, parts are removed from non-operational units of the same type and reused for maintenance. This process requires twice the workload of standard parts replacement due to the need for both removal and installation, placing an excessive burden on units. Based on this, the MOD/JSDF has secured a substantial maintenance budget since FY2023 to resolve equipment non-operational issues caused by parts shortages and to maximize the number of operationally available equipment by FY2027.

(2) Increasing the Number of Operationally Available Equipment

a. Securing Parts

While accommodating the increasing sophistication of equipment, the MOD/JSDF will work to resolve equipment non-operational issues caused by parts shortages by securing budget for parts and repairs, taking into account lead times (the time required for parts delivery). To this end, we will refine supply and demand forecasting by, for example, adding a function to the supply management system that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to estimate parts demand, thereby ensuring appropriate stock levels. In addition, major supply warehouses will be automated, streamlined, and systematized to enable accurate inventory management, aiming for rapid delivery of parts in response to unit needs.

b. Promotion of Outsourcing

To increase the number of operationally available equipment, the MOD/JSDF makes effective use of limited resources by utilizing external resources, including by outsourcing sustainment and maintenance of equipment.

To promote more efficient maintenance of certain types of equipment, the MOD/JSDF is outsourcing tasks such as analyzing maintenance plans and collecting necessary data with the aim of reducing the number of inspection and maintenance items. Through these efforts, the MOD/JSDF will increase the number of operationally available equipment while reducing the burden on personnel engaged in sustainment and maintenance work and their units.

c. Introduction of Digital Transformation (DX)

To efficiently carry out various types of operations, it is necessary to drastically transform the way operations are conducted through DX, including the introduction of the latest digital infrastructure. To this end, the MOD/JSDF will promote the introduction of DX in the logistics support field to optimize sustainment and maintenance of equipment. Specifically, in addition to the introduction of AI-based supply management systems, the MOD/JSDF will consider utilizing Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), an automatic authentication technology through radio waves to read and write information on integration circuit (IC) tags in a contactless manner to allow the inventory status of parts and other items to be grasped more accurately, as well as consider the use of 3D printers to increase the number of operationally available equipment and ensure stable and planned acquisition of equipment.

d. Expansion of Performance Based Logistics (PBL)[27] and Other Comprehensive Contracts

The MOD/JSDF is working to expand the scope of PBL contracts that contribute to increasing the number of operationally available equipment, while verifying their cost-effectiveness in order to achieve effective and efficient sustainment and maintenance.

In FY2026, the MOD/JSDF plans to launch a PBL project for the sustainment and maintenance of one transport vessel scheduled for deployment to the JSDF Maritime Transport Group.

5 Improving the Resiliency of Facilities

(1) Current Status of and Initiatives for JSDF Facilities

Many JSDF facilities are aging, as they were constructed under outdated seismic standards. Therefore, it is necessary to upgrade these facilities to ensure the safety of personnel

27 PBL contracts are concluded under long-term public-private partnerships for a comprehensive scope of work, with emphasis placed on outcomes achieved through the provision of services and other support.

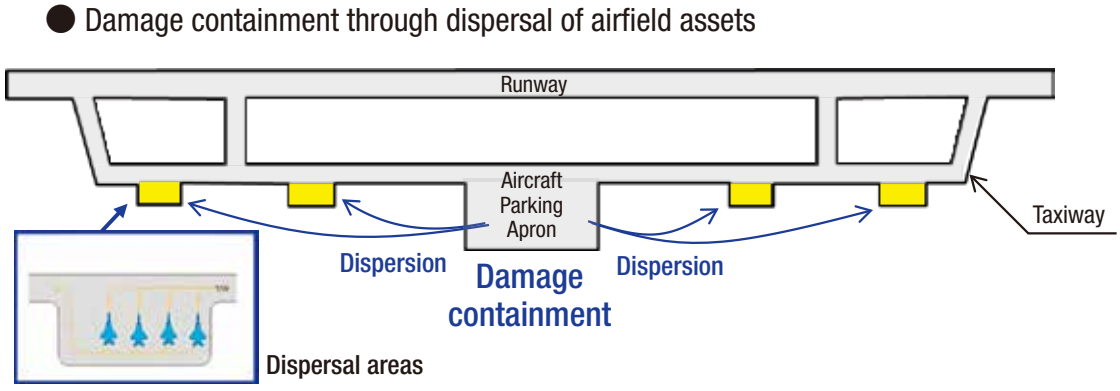
and to maintain their functionality even in wartime. To address this issue, the MOD/JSDF conducted surveys of over 20,000 JSDF facilities located in 283 sites including all camps and bases. Based on the results of these surveys, the MOD/JSDF has developed the Master Plan (MP) and is advancing the plan for efficient reconstruction of the facilities in order of its priorities.

Besides, as disaster countermeasures, flood prevention measures, slope collapse[28] prevention measures, and other measures are being taken.

In addition to developing ammunition depots, various measures are being implemented to enhance resiliency, such as the dispersed placement of facilities essential for equipment operation, as well as recovery and contingency measures in the event that facilities are damaged.

See Fig. III-1-2-17 (Dispersal areas (image)), Chapter 4, Section 1-4 (Measures to Promote Harmony between Defense Facilities and Surrounding Areas)

Fig. III-1-2-17 Dispersal areas (image)



(2) Development of Ammunition Depots

In promoting the acquisition of various types of ammunition, including stand-off missiles, the necessary development of ammunition depots will be undertaken. Efforts will be made to accelerate the development of such depots by implementing measures including the joint operation of ammunition depots by the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF; the joint use of U.S. military ammunition depots; and the dispersed placement of various types of ammunition across remote islands to ensure resiliency.

(3) Improvement of Resiliency of JSDF Facilities

To protect major equipment and command posts, etc. and ensure a tenacious fighting posture the MOD/JSDF will establish underground basing, reinforcing facilities and take measures against electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attacks, including the installation of filters on power lines. In addition, dispersal pads for fighter jets to deploy dispersedly and hardening hangars[29] are being developed.

With regard to reconstructing facilities, protective features against threats such as chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) weapons, electromagnetic spectrum attacks, and guerrilla assaults are being equipped. In addition, alongside measures to address aging infrastructure, efforts will be made to ensure that facilities can fully function by reinforcing their structures according to their function and importance, securing safe separation distances between facilities, and consolidating facilities as appropriate. Lifelines such as electricity and water will also be upgraded through the addition of redundancy to systems and the replacement of aging infrastructure, in coordination with facility reconstruction efforts. At the same time, base security capabilities will be enhanced and personnel requirements will be streamlined through the introduction of counter-drone equipment, thereby improving the resiliency of JSDF facilities.

(4) Maintaining and Strengthening the Functions of Camps, Bases, etc., that Serve as Bases for Disaster Response

To prevent the functional degradation of JSDF facilities due to potential damage from large-scale disasters, disaster prevention measures are being promoted at camps and bases where such damage is anticipated, such as from tsunamis.

28 A steep slope that collapses rapidly following a heavy rainfall or earthquake
29 Strengthening to withstand an attack

More specifically, measures such as locating power-receiving and -transforming equipment on high ground and installing flood barriers at entrances are being implemented. While addressing various challenges associated with climate change, the MOD/JSDF will advance the resiliency of facilities such as camps and bases.

(5) Development of Facilities Required for New Unit Formation and Introduction of New Equipment

As part of facility development necessary for establishing new units and introducing new equipment, the GSDF established Camp Saga in July 2025, where the air transport squadron was relocated. The MSDF will develop its facilities in the Sakibe East Area of Sasebo to accommodate large destroyers and other vessels. The ASDF will develop its facilities at Chitose Air Base in Hokkaido and Komatsu Air Base in Ishikawa Prefecture to accommodate F-35A and F-35B fighter jets, those at Fuchu Air Base in Tokyo responding to the organizational restructuring for its space-related mission, as well as those at Kitadaitojima Island in Okinawa Prefecture to accommodate mobile warning and control radars.



Facility improvement (Sasebo)

Section 3 Reinforcing the Defense Architecture of the Whole Country

The Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) must be strong in order to protect Japan, but national defense cannot be achieved without a whole-of-country approach. For this reason, besides the fundamental reinforcement of its defense capabilities, Japan is developing a defense architecture for the whole country by integrating its national power, which includes its diplomatic, intelligence, economic, and technological capabilities, and systematically combining various policy means. In doing so, it is essential to strengthen such whole-of-government efforts while breaking down the stove-piping approach within the Government.

From this perspective, the National Security Strategy (NSS) calls for advancing the reinforcement of Japan's comprehensive defense architecture as a complementary initiative to the fundamental reinforcement of its defense capabilities. It sets forth promotion of efforts in four areas: (1) research and development (R&D), (2) public infrastructure development, (3) cybersecurity and (4) international cooperation to enhance the deterrence capabilities of Japan and like-minded countries. In addition to these initiatives, continuous peacetime monitoring and surveillance, initiatives related to the space domain, and responses to large-scale disasters and the rescue and transportation of Japanese nationals and others overseas are also efforts that require the full power of the nation. Thus, the Ministry of Defense (MOD)/JSDF will reinforce the defense architecture of the whole country while responding to the aforementioned efforts in close cooperation with relevant ministries and agencies, local governments, and others.

1 Research and Development

State-of-the-art science and technology is advancing at an ever-faster rate, making it extremely difficult to distinguish between technologies for civilian and security applications. Worldwide, innovation in civilian applications and innovation in defense applications have developed while influencing each other. Accordingly, in Japan as well, it is crucial to leverage R&D achievements being actively pursued by both the government and private sectors for defense purposes.

With this in mind, the NSS sets forth advancement of efforts in R&D fields, calling for the promotion of R&D in science and technology that contributes to the enhancement of the comprehensive defense architecture by matching R&D needs based on the views of the MOD with emerging technologies possessed by the relevant ministries and agencies.[1]

Based on this principle, research conducted by relevant ministries and agencies for civilian use that also contributes to the reinforcement of the comprehensive defense architecture will be promoted for the time being as "important technological challenges," and a matching project to be implemented from FY2024 was approved. Specifically, the process proceeds as follows:

- The MOD explains its research and development needs to the relevant ministries and agencies in a manner that allows experts to understand them as concretely as possible.
- The relevant ministries and agencies share with the MOD a wide range of technological seeds with potential to contribute to the stated needs.
- The needs and seeds are compared and organized into "important technological challenges" to be promoted for the time being.
- Based on the "important technological challenges," exchanges of views are held between the MOD and the relevant ministries and agencies, national research and development agencies, and other experts, and "matching projects"[2] are approved from among the research conducted by relevant ministries and agencies for civilian use.

In addition to promoting the approved projects through the initiatives undertaken by relevant ministries and agencies, the MOD/JSDF intends to actively identify and foster technologies with high potential to contribute to the future reinforcement of Japan's defense capabilities, and to apply these technologies to the advancement of defense equipment and other areas.

See Fig. III-1-3-1 (Overview of Matching Projects to be Implemented in FY2026), Part IV, Chapter 2, Section 2-3 (Active Utilization of Civilian Technology)

1 Excerpt from the "Important Technological Challenges for Promoting Research and Development Contributing to the Reinforcement of the Comprehensive Defense Architecture" (August 25, 2023), compiled by the Ministerial Meeting on Research and Development and Public Infrastructure Development Contributing to the Reinforcement of the Comprehensive Defense Architecture (Chair: Chief Cabinet Secretary).

2 Budgeted as part of projects by the relevant ministries and agencies. No contracts are entered into between the MOD and the relevant ministries and agencies/national research and development agencies. In addition, the research findings are publicized (the fact that the research becomes a matching project in itself does not restrict the publication of research findings).

Fig. III-1-3-1 Overview of Matching Projects to be Implemented in FY2026

Important technological challenge	Overview of matching projects
Energy	• R&D on solar power transmission technology • R&D on high-performance energy storage technology • R&D on high-power laser technology, etc.
Sensing	• R&D on high-precision technology for PNT • R&D on environmental electromagnetic wave measurement technologies • R&D on to remote sensing • R&D on ultra-high sensitivity sensing technology • R&D on technology for fusing information from multiple sensors, etc.
Computing	• R&D on next-generation computing such as quantum computers • R&D on edge computing • R&D on using photonics-electronics convergence technology, etc.
Information processing	• R&D on prediction and extraction technology for big data • R&D on AI-based support for environmental and situational awareness • R&D on effective visualization technology for sensor data
Information communication	• R&D on high-speed, large-capacity, low-latency communication technology • R&D on high-speed optical communication devices • R&D on secure communication technology using quantum technology, etc.
Information security	• R&D on the sophistication of cyber attack observation technology • R&D on cyberspace security technology • R&D on security technology using secret computation, etc.
Material	• R&D on utilizing AI-based computational science and advanced measurement technologies for materials • R&D on self-repairing functional materials • R&D on advanced processing technology for heat-resistant materials, etc.
Unmanned, automation	• R&D on environmental recognition technology for drones • R&D on brain-machine interfaces • R&D on drone group control technology, etc.
Machinery (structure, design, propulsion, etc.)	• R&D on safety and reliability in harsh environments • R&D on design and manufacturing processes using numerical analysis • R&D on next-generation flight technology • R&D on satellite technology, etc.
Biomedical	• R&D on advanced trauma care technologies • R&D on materials creation • R&D on crisis management and response technologies for toxic substances • R&D on analysis and evaluation of biological information and samples, etc.

2 Public Infrastructure Development

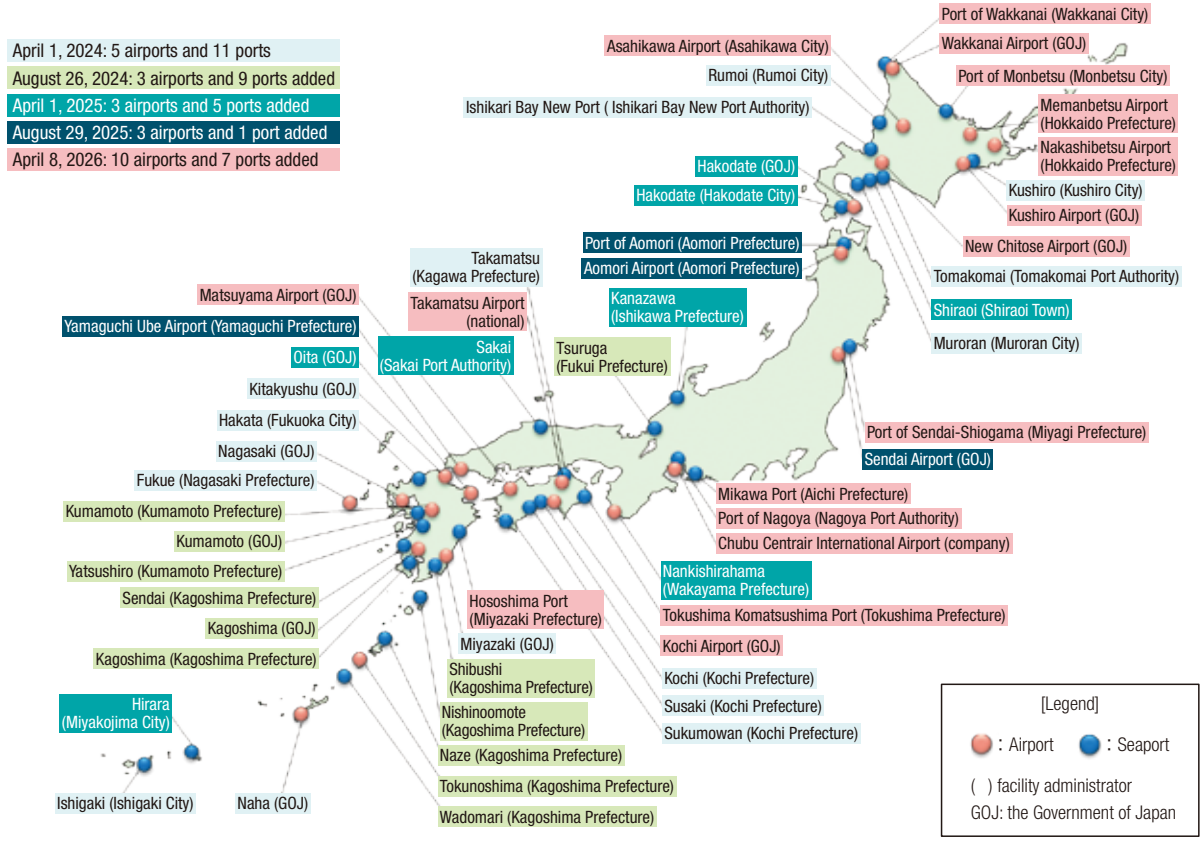
The NSS stipulates the establishment of a cross-governmental mechanism to develop and enhance the functions of public infrastructure such as airports and seaports, as well as the establishment of rules on their ordinary utilization, with the aim of enabling their smooth utilization by the JSDF and the Japan Coast Guard.

Under this policy, in order to effectively implement responses taking into account the security environment, frameworks for smooth utilization have been established between relevant ministries and agencies and each facility administrator. This ensures that the JSDF and the Japan Coast Guard can smoothly use necessary airports and seaports in peacetime, particularly on the southwestern islands but also in other regions. The airports and seaports for which frameworks have been established are designated as "Specific Use Airport and Seaport."

At the "Specific Use Airport and Seaport," necessary development or promotion of existing projects will be carried out, which contributes to primarily civilian use and also smooth use by aircraft and vessels of the JSDF and the Japan Coast Guard. Additionally, while promoting the "Specific Use Airport and Seaport" initiative, the JSDF has determined that enhancing the accessibility between "Specific Use Airport and Seaports" and JSDF bases is necessary in order to facilitate more rapid and reliable transportation of personnel and supplies. Therefore, from FY2025, "roads" have been added to the scope of this initiative, with the aim of developing the necessary road networks while prioritizing civilian use. The MOD/JSDF will continue to coordinate with the relevant ministries and agencies to further enhance this initiative.

See Fig. III-1-3-2 (Specific Use Airport and Seaport (as of April 8, 2026))

Fig. III-1-3-2 Specific Use Airport and Seaport (as of April 8, 2026)



3 Cybersecurity

1 The Whole-of-Government Approach

Based on the National Security Strategy (NSS), the government of Japan as a whole intends to strengthen its response capabilities in the field of cybersecurity equal to or surpassing the level of leading Western countries, including the introduction of active cyber defense in cases where there is a possibility of serious cyberattacks that cause national security concerns even if they do not amount to an armed attack.

In May 2025, the Cyber Response Capability Strengthening Act and Necessary Arrangement of Relevant Acts[3] were enacted by the Diet based on recommendations from an expert panel aimed at introducing active cyber defense. These recommendations included “Enhancement of Public Private Partnership,” such as the enhancement of information sharing between Government and private companies in the event of cyberattacks and other emergencies; “Utilizing I.D.C. (Information and Data under Communications),” encompassing the analysis of I.D.C. to understand the nature of cyberattacks; and “Remote Access and Neutralization Measures,” such as accessing the source of a cyberattack to prevent damage when an attack occurs.

In July 2025, following the enactment of the Cyber Response Capability Strengthening Act and other legislation, the National center of Incident readiness and Strategy for Cybersecurity (NISC) was reorganized, and the National Cybersecurity Office (NCO), headed by the National Cyber Director, was established. In addition to serving as the secretariat for the Cybersecurity Strategic Headquarters, the NCO monitors and analyzes unlawful activities targeting the information systems of various government agencies, provides advice, conducts audits, and is responsible for the overall coordination of cybersecurity enforcement.

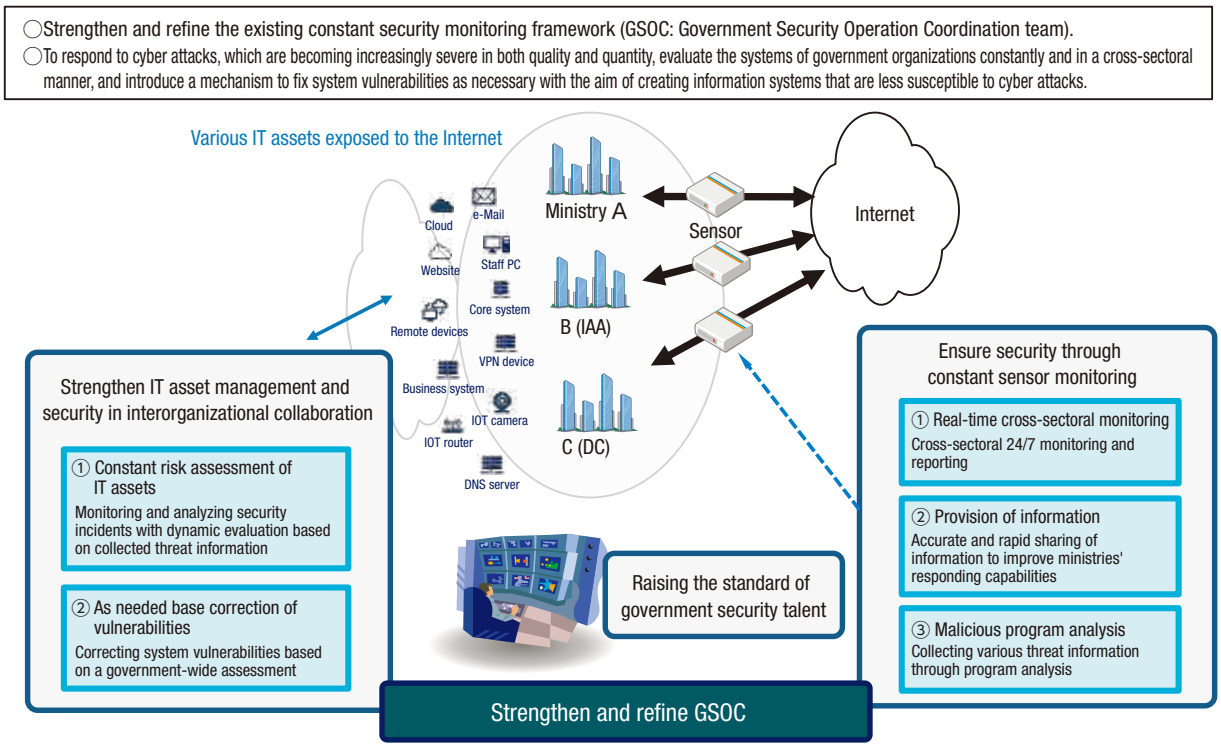
3 Act on the Prevention of Damage from Unauthorized Acts Against Critical Computers, and the Act on the Development of Related Laws Accompanying the Enforcement of the Act on the Prevention of Damage from Unauthorized Acts Against Critical Computers

Moreover, after the Act enters into force in October of this year, the JSDF will become able to implement critical computing systems protection measures in case of special need to take response by the JSDF in order to prevent damage from cyber attacks targeting essential infrastructure.[4]

The MOD/JSDF will actively contribute to government-wide efforts, including the introduction of active cyber defense, while continuing to coordinate closely with the NCO and other related ministries and agencies.

See Fig. III-1-3-3 (Strengthening Cyber Security of Government Organizations), Section 1-1-5 (Responses in the Cyber Domain), Section 2-4-2 (Cyber Domain)

Fig. III-1-3-3 Strengthening Cyber Security of Government Organizations



2 Collaboration and Cooperation with Related Organizations

Along with the National Police Agency, the Digital Agency, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the MOD/JSDF, as one of the government agencies that are members of the Cybersecurity Strategic Headquarters, contributes to the cross-government initiatives led by the NCO, including participating in cyberattack response training and personnel exchanges and providing information about cyberattacks as well as sending personnel to the Cyber Incident Mobile Assistance Team[5] (CYMAT). In addition, the MOD/JSDF is cooperating by applying the knowledge and experience of the JSDF to penetration tests of information systems of Government ministries and agencies conducted by the NCO.

4 Electricity, gas, water, and other such business operators, as stipulated in the Act for the Promotion of Ensuring National Security through Integrated Implementation of Economic Measures.

5 Team that provides technical support and advice to prevent the spread of damage, engage in recovery, investigate the cause and obviate recurrence when an information security-related event occurs in need of a unified response by the government.

4 International Cooperation to Enhance the Deterrence Capabilities of Japan and Its Like-minded Countries and Others

In order to create a security environment desirable for Japan, it is essential not only to fundamentally reinforce our own defense capabilities but also to enhance the deterrence capabilities of like-minded countries. Thus, in order to help strengthen the security and deterrence capabilities of like-minded countries, in 2023 MOFA established a new grant assistance framework, the Official Security Assistance (OSA), which is separate from Official Development Assistance (ODA). OSA is intended to respond to the security needs of like-minded countries through the provision of equipment and materials as well as development of infrastructure. The initiative is being carried out in close cooperation among relevant ministries and agencies, including not only MOFA but also the MOD.

In FY2025, Japan decided under the OSA framework to provide equipment and support for infrastructure development to Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Tonga, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Fiji.

See Fig. III-1-3-4 (OSA Results in FY2024-2025), Chapter 3, Section 1-4 (Proactive and Strategic Initiatives for Capacity Building)

Fig. III-1-3-4 OSA Results in FY2024-2025

Fiscal Year	Nation	E/N signed/ exchanged	Amount	Equipment
2024	The Philippines	December 5, 2024	1,600M yen	Air surveillance radar system-related equipment, etc.
	Djibouti	December 25, 2024	1,100M yen	Coastal surveillance radar system, etc.
	Indonesia	January 10, 2025	1,000M yen	High-speed patrol boat
	Mongolia	February 10, 2025	1,300M yen	Air traffic control-related equipment, etc.
2025	The Philippines	January 15, 2026	900M yen	Combined boat storage facility and launch ramp
	Indonesia	January 27, 2026	1.9B yen	High-speed patrol boats
	Malaysia	October 22, 2025	3.1B yen	Diving support vessels, cease-fire surveillance equipment
	Thailand	March 27, 2026	500M yen	Disaster response and maritime search-and-rescue equipment
	Sri Lanka	September 29, 2025	500M yen	Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)
	PNG	September 16, 2025	400M yen	Heavy equipment for disaster response and road construction
	Tonga	December 5, 2025	300M yen	Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), uniforms
	Fiji	March 30, 2026	400M yen	Emergency medical equipment

(Note) E/N is a document exchanged between the Government of Japan and the Government of the recipient country.



Surveillance drones provided to Malaysia through OSA (September 2025)

5 Continuous, Persistent Information Gathering and Surveillance from Peacetime

1 The Whole-of-Government Approach

Continuous information gathering and surveillance from peacetime, along with analysis of collected information in cooperation with relevant ministries and agencies, is vital for the early detection of signs of situations and for enabling swift, whole-of-government decision-making according to situations. For this reason, the Government as a whole conducts simulations and integrated training and exercises to improve the effectiveness of responses, while establishing coordination procedures, on a regular basis. In addition, with regard to the protection of critical facilities such as nuclear power plants and response to infringements that do not lead to armed attacks or Armed Attack Situations in areas surrounding remote islands, Japan conducts training and exercises between the police, the JCG, and the MOD/JSDF on a regular basis.

See Section 1-2-1 (Continuous, Persistent Information Gathering and Surveillance Surrounding Japan)

2 Reinforcing Coordination with the Japan Coast Guard

Ensuring maritime security is primarily the mission of the JCG, but in cases that cannot be handled by the JCG, the JSDF will also respond through maritime security operations and public security operations in coordination with the JCG.

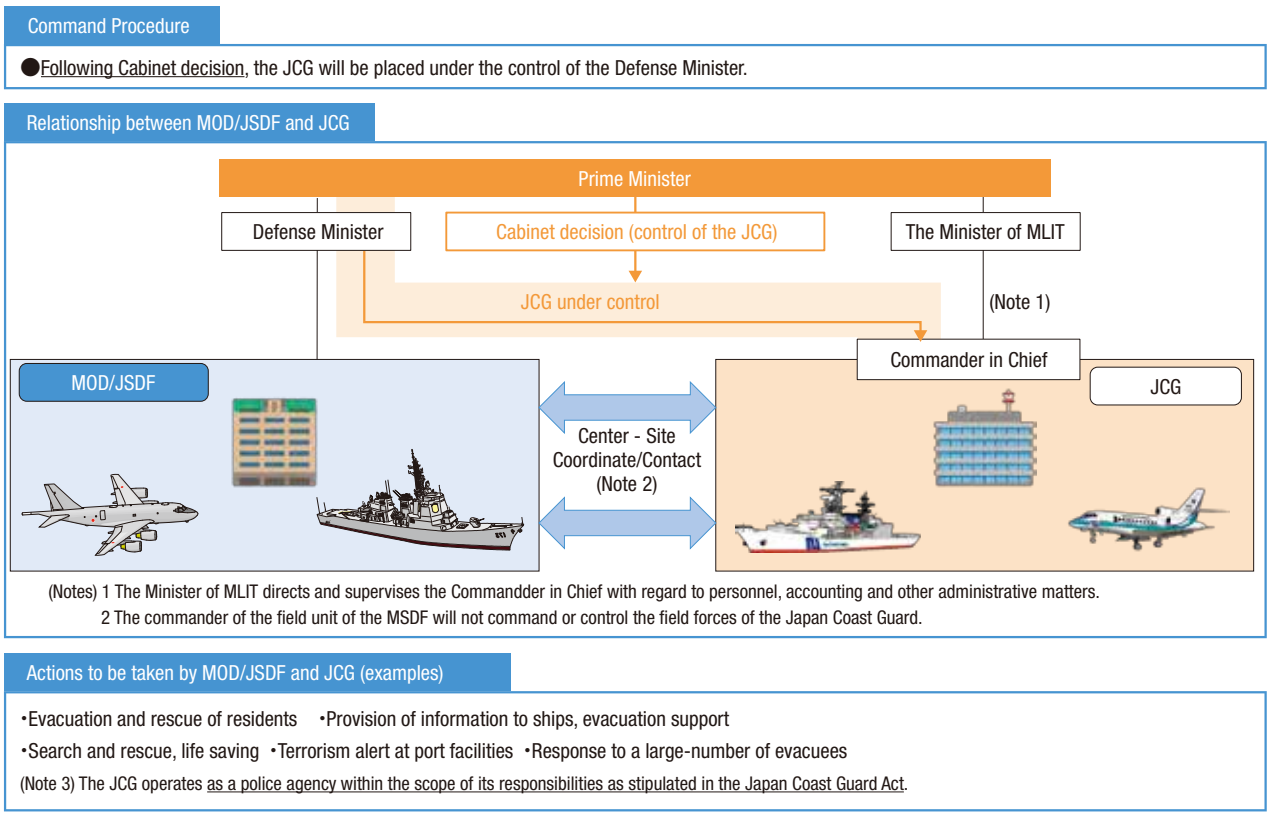
In addition, in the event of an armed attack by other countries, the JSDF will respond through defense operations, which are its main duty. It is becoming even more critical to reinforce coordination between the JSDF and JCG to respond seamlessly to any circumstances. The MSDF and JCG conduct joint training on a regular basis to improve their skills and enhance their joint response capabilities.

Article 80 of the Self-Defense Forces Law[6] stipulates the "control of the JCG." In 2023, "control guidelines" were formulated regarding coordination between the two organizations in the event that an order is issued for defense operations, including specific procedures for control of the JCG by the Defense Minister based on the article. Following the formulation of the "control guidelines," the MOD/JSDF is working to further strengthen coordination with the JCG through joint training and other efforts.

In March 2026, a tabletop exercise assuming an Armed Attack Situation was conducted at the MOD's Ichigaya area. The exercise verified the procedures established in the "control guidelines," including actions assumed to be carried out by the JCG under the control of the Defense Minister, such as the evacuation of residents using patrol vessels and the provision of information to ships navigating near dangerous maritime areas.

See Fig. III-1-3-5 (Guidelines for the Defense Minister's Control of the Japan Coast Guard under a Defense Operation Order in Armed Attack Situations)), Part I, Chapter 3, Section 2-2-6 (2) (Military Activities in Japan's Surrounding Waters And Airspace)

Fig. III-1-3-5 Guidelines for the Defense Minister's Control of the Japan Coast Guard under a Defense Operation Order in Armed Attack Situations)



6 Article 80, Paragraph 1 of the Self-Defense Forces Law states, "If the Prime Minister orders defense operations to all or part of the JSDF in accordance with Article 76, Paragraph 1 (limited to the part pertaining to Item 1) or Article 78, Paragraph 1, all or part of the JCG shall be placed under the control of the Defense Minister when it is deemed that there is a special need to do so."



A JCG training vessel and MSDF destroyer during joint training

6 Efforts Related to the Space Domain

1 The Whole-of-Government Approach

In 2023, based on the National Security Strategy of Japan (NSS), the Strategic Headquarters for National Space Policy formulated the Space Security Initiative for the first time, which concretized issues and policies in the field of space security, including the use of civilian technology in the defense sector and also decided on the Basic Plan on Space Policy, which reflects this initiative. Formulated based on the Basic Space Act, the Basic Plan on Space Policy is the most fundamental plan for space development and utilization in Japan and aims to strengthen the comprehensive infrastructure that supports Japan's space activities. The Space Security Initiative states that the goal of space security is for Japan, together with its allies, like-minded countries and others, to maintain the stable use of and free access to outer space, while promoting national peace and prosperity and the safety and security of its people through outer space. It also states that, based on the needs of the MOD/JSDF, government research and development will be actively linked to the fundamental strengthening of defense capabilities by using government research and also developing advanced technologies conducted by government agencies for defense purposes as well.

Subsequently, in the same year, based on the Space Security Initiative and others, a public-private council on strengthening the stability of the space system was established to first accurately identify and analyze the situation, then respond appropriately through public-private cooperation in the event of an unforeseen space-related incident. Additionally, in March 2024, issues related to the maintenance and development of the technological, industrial and human resource base across the security and civilian sectors were examined to identify technologies for which Japan should promote development and then the Space Technology Strategy, including a technology roadmap indicating a timeline to develop such technologies, was formulated.

In addition, led by the Cabinet Office's National Space Policy Secretariat, which is in charge of planning, formulating and coordinating policies for the utilization of space development for the entire government, space policy is being promoted based on the Space Activities Act,[7] the Remote Sensing Data Act[8] and the Space Resources Act.[9]

See Fig. III-1-2-8 (Strengthening Defense Capabilities in the Space Domain (image)), Section 1-1-4 (Responses in the Space Domain), Section 2-4-1 (Space Domain), Part I, Chapter 4, Section 3-1 (Trends in Space Domain)

2 Strengthening of Cooperation with Related Organizations and Space-Related Industries

It is of great importance for both the lives of Japanese citizens and national defense to ensure stable utilization of space for purposes such as information gathering, communications and positioning. To this end, the MOD/JSDF is strengthening cooperation and collaboration, including research and development, with related organizations including the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and the private businesses. In doing so, the MOD/JSDF will promote investment in technological development in the private sector by further utilizing civilian technology in the defense field and enhance Japan's overall capabilities in space. In addition, in 2023, with the start of the operation of space-related

7 Act on Launching of Spacecraft, etc. and Control of Spacecraft
8 Act on Ensuring Appropriate Handling of Satellite Remote Sensing Data
9 Act on the Promotion of Business Activities for the Exploration and Development of Space Resources

systems the MOD began providing information, including orbit information on space objects, to private businesses and others that operate satellites. Furthermore, that same year, the ASDF opened the Space Collaboration & Innovation Office in a private shared office with the aim of actively exchanging opinions with private space operators and other such purposes. The ASDF has stationed several of its personnel in this office, where they exchange views with private business operators. The knowledge gained through this is reflected in future equipment introduction and other matters.



Strengthening cooperation with space-related industries

7 Response to Large-Scale Disasters, Etc.

1 The Whole-of-Government Approach

(1) Basic Concept

Large-scale disasters that can be triggered by phenomena such as earthquakes and typhoons are serious threats to the lives, health, and property of Japanese citizens and require Japan to respond with all-out efforts.

In the event of a large-scale disaster, etc., the MOD/JSDF closely cooperates with the police, fire departments, JCG, local governments, and other related organizations and parties to carry out life-saving operations, emergency reconstruction, livelihood support, and other such efforts.

At the initial stage of a disaster, the MOD/JSDF strives to promptly ascertain the damage situation and gives the highest priority to saving lives.[10] At the same time, the MOD/JSDF provides livelihood support while coordinating with local governments, relevant ministries and agencies, and others regarding division of roles, response policies, duration of operations, utilization of private-sector resources, and other matters. In doing so, the JSDF's activities are carefully determined in accordance with three criteria (urgency, public nature, and non-substitutability), and caution is exercised to ensure that activities are not expanded to include tasks that should ideally be carried out by local governments, relevant ministries and agencies, and other parties. Notably, if a local government's response posture is not functioning due to the disaster, the JSDF may initially provide specific support in the form of proposals. For this purpose, the JSDF is strengthening dissemination of information so that people who truly need support by the JSDF can easily access the information related to support.

See Part II, Chapter 4, 3-6 (Disaster Relief Dispatches and Others)

(2) Collaboration with Local Governments and Other Relevant Organization

It is important for the MOD/JSDF to strengthen collaboration with local governments and other relevant organizations under normal circumstances for the purpose of conducting disaster relief operations smoothly. For this reason, the JSDF implements various measures including: (1) Assignment of the post of Liaison Officer for Civil Protection and Disaster Management (administrative official) at the JSDF Provincial Cooperation Offices; (2) Temporary assignment of JSDF officers to the department in charge of disaster prevention at the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and mutual exchange between administrative officials of both the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) Middle Army and Hyogo Prefectural Government; and (3) Recommendation of retired JSDF personnel with knowledge in disaster prevention in accordance with requests from local governments.

As of the end of March 2026, 692 retired uniformed JSDF personnel are working in disaster prevention and crisis management sections and the like at 494 local governments in 47 prefectures throughout Japan. Such cooperation in human resources is a very effective way of strengthening collaboration between the MOD/JSDF and local governments, and its efficacy was confirmed through responses to actual disasters. In particular, each GSDF regional army headquarters establishes a forum for interaction with senior directors for crisis management and other officials from local governments and shares information and exchanges opinions to strengthen collaboration with

10 The JSDF has the "FAST-Force" unit on standby with a permanent state of readiness at camps and other locations throughout Japan to ensure that disaster relief operations are conducted promptly.

those local governments. In addition, the MOD/JSDF strives to improve disaster response capabilities through measures such as conducting disaster response training together with local governments. Furthermore, besides strengthening coordination during peacetime, in the event of a disaster, the MOD/JSDF promptly dispatches liaison officers from units to local governments to facilitate smooth coordination between the local governments and the JSDF.

(3) Actions Based on the Five-Year Acceleration Measures for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Building National Resilience

In Japan, the Cabinet has approved the five-year acceleration measures[11] for disaster prevention, mitigation, and building national resilience. From FY2021 through FY2025, priority is being given to promoting efforts to ensure the operational readiness of JSDF airfields and port facilities, as well as other related measures.

Based on these measures, in June 2025, the Cabinet approved the 1st Mid-term Plan for the Implementation of National Resilience, which covers the period from FY2026 to FY2030.

In response to these developments, the MOD/JSDF is making focused and intensive efforts to strengthen infrastructure such as JSDF airfields and port facilities, develop equipment and materials necessary to restore and utilize equipment, and implement earthquake proofing and aging countermeasures for these facilities, all from the perspective of maintaining the critical functions of the JSDF during disasters.

VOICE

Disaster Relief Operations

NAGASAKI Kotaro, Governor of Yamanashi Prefecture

I would like to express my deepest respect and gratitude to the members of the JSDF for safeguarding our peace and security through national defense, international peace cooperation, and disaster relief operations.

In January of this year, during a period of exceptionally low precipitation, the lowest levels seen only once every 30 years, a forest fire broke out and spread near Mt. Ogi in Uenohara City, Yamanashi Prefecture. It turned into the largest forest fire in the prefecture since the end of World War II. The ground and undergrowth were extremely dry, and strong winds created highly challenging conditions. Nevertheless, thanks to reinforcements from firefighting aviation units of other municipalities and the swift and precise disaster relief operations of the JSDF, the fire was quickly brought under control without having to rely on rainfall.

In particular, the large-volume water drops by heavy-lift helicopters significantly contributed to preventing the further spread of the fire. Additionally, closely coordinated containment efforts between the JSDF and Yamanashi Prefecture's ground firefighting units resulted in zero human casualties.

All fire departments from the prefecture provided reinforcements. Working in collaboration with the JSDF and other municipalities, they conducted effective firefighting activities using drones to monitor fire behavior. I believe this experience will provide valuable lessons for responding to forest fires in the future.

I am committed to making continued efforts toward building a disaster-resilient Yamanashi Prefecture while working more closely with the JSDF.



Mr. Nagasaki, Governor of Yamanashi Prefecture

11 In light of the increasingly severe and frequent occurrence of weather disasters due to climate change, the imminence of large-scale earthquakes such as a Nankai Trough earthquake, as well as the aging of infrastructure that was intensively developed from Japan's period of rapid economic growth, it is necessary to accelerate and deepen efforts for disaster prevention and mitigation as well as building national resilience. It is also essential to utilize digital technology to efficiently promote measures for building national resilience. To this end, efforts are being made for further acceleration and deepening of measures in the fields of "countermeasures against increasingly severe wind and flood damage, imminent large-scale earthquakes, etc.," "acceleration of aging countermeasures towards a shift to preventive maintenance of infrastructure," and "promotion of digitization, etc. to efficiently advance measures related to national resiliency." The scale of additional projects required in the five years through FY2025 is specified and focused and intensive countermeasures are to be taken.

(4) Disaster Relief Operations and Ensuring Japan's Defense Posture

In recent years, prolonged disaster relief operations have been increasing. However, even while conducting such operations, it remains essential to continue conducting training and exercises without interruption in order to maintain and improve skills and the regular missions of surveillance and monitoring, so that Japan's defense posture is not affected.

To this end, when a disaster occurs, the MOD/JSDF responds with their full capacity by making maximum use of the JSDF's capabilities for life-saving operations. As for operations such as livelihood support, the MOD/JSDF coordinates with local governments, relevant ministries and agencies regarding response policies, division of roles, and utilization of private companies, and carries out operations with an appropriate posture, scale, and duration while comprehensively taking into account the three criteria (urgency, public nature, and non-substitutability). Going forward, disaster relief operations will continue to be conducted appropriately while ensuring Japan's defense posture.

2 Responses to Natural Disasters, Etc.

(1) Formulating Plans for Responding to Earthquakes

The MOD/JSDF has formulated the necessary plans to enable prompt and systematic disaster relief operations in the event of a large-scale earthquake or tsunami, such as an earthquake directly under the Tokyo metropolitan area, a Nankai Trough Earthquake, or trench-type earthquakes in the vicinity of the Japan and Chishima Trenches, as expected by the Central Disaster Management Council.[12]

(2) Disaster Relief in Response to Wind and Flood Damage

a. Disaster Relief in Response to Typhoon No. 8 in Kitadaitojima, Okinawa Prefecture

In July 2025, due to record-breaking rainfall caused by Typhoon No. 8, flooding above floor level and road flooding occurred in Kitadaito Village in the Shimajiri District of Okinawa Prefecture. In response to a disaster relief request from the Governor of Okinawa Prefecture, the GSDF and ASDF conducted operations such as transportation of supplies and water drainage support.



Disaster relief in response to Typhoon No. 8 in Kitadaitojima, Okinawa Prefecture

b. Disaster Relief in Response to Heavy Rain in Kagoshima Prefecture

In August 2025, due to the effects of heavy rain, water supply disruptions occurred as a result of damage to water pipes in Kirishima City and Aira City in Kagoshima Prefecture. In response to a disaster relief request from the Governor of Kagoshima Prefecture, the GSDF conducted water supply support operations.



Disaster relief in response to heavy rain in Kagoshima Prefecture

c. Disaster Relief in Response to Typhoon No. 22 and Typhoon No. 23 in Hachijojima, Tokyo

In October 2025, power outages, water supply disruptions, and other infrastructural damage occurred on Hachijojima (Hachijo Town, Tokyo) due to the effects of Typhoon No. 22 and Typhoon No. 23. In response to a disaster relief request from the Governor of Tokyo, the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF conducted operations such as the transportation of daily necessities, water supply support, and bathing support over a 37-day period.

12 As one of the councils in the Cabinet Office, this council comprises the Prime Minister, all cabinet ministers, representatives of designated public organizations and academic experts and is responsible for preparing the basic plan for disaster prevention, deliberation on important matters related to disaster prevention and so on.



Disaster relief in response to Typhoon No. 22 and Typhoon No. 23 in Hachijojima, Tokyo

(3) Disaster Relief in Response to Forest Fires

Among the forest and wildfires that occurred between April 2025 and the end of March 2026, for those that could not be extinguished through firefighting efforts by local governments, the JSDF conducted aerial firefighting and other activities using helicopters of the GSDF, based on disaster relief requests from the respective governors in 16 prefectures (Nagasaki, Shimane, Hiroshima, Tokushima, Okinawa, Oita, Gunma, Kanagawa, Yamanashi, Shizuoka, Miyazaki, Saitama, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Yamagata, and Nagano; 24 cases). Although there were cases in which disaster relief requests were received in response to multiple forest fires occurring at the same time, appropriate measures were taken to handle these situations.

a. In August 2025, the JSDF responded to a forest fire that broke out in Jinsekikogen Town, Jinseki District, Hiroshima Prefecture, in close coordination with local governments and fire departments. Up to 11 GSDF aircraft were deployed, conducting aerial firefighting and other operations 128 times in total.



Disaster relief operations in response to a forest fire in Jinsekikogen, Jinseki District, Hiroshima Prefecture

b. In November 2025, the JSDF responded to a forest fire (a residential fire that spread to forested areas) in Saganoseki, Oita City, Oita Prefecture, in coordination with local governments and fire departments. Up to 6 GSDF aircraft were deployed, conducting aerial firefighting and other operations 114 times in total.



Disaster relief operations in response to a fire in Saganoseki, Oita City, Oita Prefecture

c. In January 2026, the JSDF responded to a forest fire that broke out in Ogiyama, Uenohara City, Yamanashi Prefecture, in close coordination with local governments and fire departments. Up to 8 GSDF aircraft were deployed, conducting aerial firefighting and other operations 899 times in total.



Disaster relief operations in response to a forest fire in Ogiyama, Uenohara City, Yamanashi Prefecture

VOICE

Transporting Emergency Patients from Tokyo's Island Region

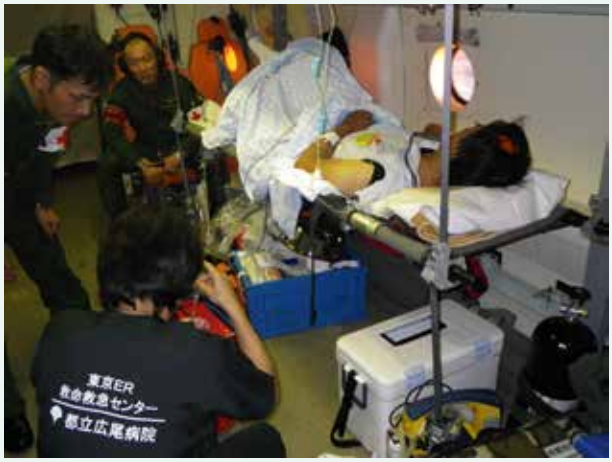
NAKAJIMA Mikio, Managing Director, Emergency and Critical Care Center, Tokyo Metropolitan Hiroo Hospital

Tokyo Metropolitan Hiroo Hospital, as the core hospital for Tokyo's islands, accepts emergency patients from the Izu Islands and the Ogasawara Islands. Hiroo Hospital is equipped with a system that allows medical images taken at clinics on the islands to be viewed remotely, which helps us to determine whether emergency transport is necessary.

The Ogasawara Islands, in particular, is only accessible by ship that operates once a week in principle, with the trip taking approximately 24 hours each way. Moreover, as the islands lie beyond the cruising range of helicopters, patients need to be transported on rotary-wing aircraft in an emergency. However, because neither Chichijima nor Hahajima has an airfield, patients must first be transported by JSDF helicopter from the islands to Iwo-To. During the flight from Chichijima or Hahajima to Iwo-To, a JSDF medical officer accompanies the patient aboard the helicopter.

Physicians from Hiroo Hospital head to Atsugi Air Base by ambulance, carrying the necessary medical equipment and medications. They then board a Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) fixed-wing aircraft and fly from Atsugi Air Base to Iwo-To and back to Atsugi Air Base. Upon arrival at Atsugi, the patient is transported to our hospital by a Tokyo Fire Department ambulance.

Despite the transport process taking seven to eight hours in total, medical care for the residents of these islands is sustained with the tremendous support of JSDF personnel.



The author and an MSDF paramedic providing medical treatment inside an aircraft

(4) Disaster Relief Involving Search and Rescue Operations

Of the aircraft accidents and maritime accidents that occurred between April 2025 and the end of March 2026, the JSDF responded to civilian aircraft crashes off the eastern coast of Tsushima City, Nagasaki Prefecture, and in Yame City, Fukuoka Prefecture, and Aso City, Kumamoto Prefecture (Mt. Aso); the capsizing of a civilian vessel off the southern coast of Miyakojima Island in Okinawa Prefecture; and a civilian falling overboard off the southern coast of Cape Muroto in Kochi Prefecture. In these cases, the JSDF conducted search and rescue operations in response to requests from the Director of the Airport Administrative Office and the Director General of the Regional Coast Guard Headquarters, among others.



Disaster relief involving search and rescue operations

See Reference 20 (Record of Disaster Relief (Past Five Years))

3 Emergency Airlift

The JSDF uses its aircraft such as helicopters to transport emergency patients from areas with insufficient medical facilities (emergency airlift). In FY2025, out of a total of 339 cases of disaster relief, 284 cases involved emergency airlift, with operations on remote islands such as the Southwestern Islands (Okinawa and Kagoshima Prefectures), the Ogasawara Islands (Tokyo), and remote islands of Nagasaki Prefecture representing the majority of such cases.



Transportation of emergency patients by ASDF aircraft in 2025

4 Responses to Nuclear Disasters

In order to respond to nuclear disasters, the MOD/JSDF has formulated "The Nuclear Disaster Response Plan." The JSDF also participates in general nuclear disaster prevention drills jointly implemented by the government, local governments and nuclear operators, to confirm the effectiveness of municipal governments' evacuation plans and to strengthen cooperation with relevant agencies in emergencies related to nuclear disasters.

REFERENCE: Disaster relief operations
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/defense/saigai/index.html

REFERENCE: The MOD/JSDF's (disaster management) X (Twitter) account
URL: https://x.com/ModJapan_saigai

8 Responses to Rescue and Transportation of Japanese Nationals and Others Overseas (R/TJNO)

1 Basic Concept

Protection of Japanese nationals who are staying or traveling overseas is one of the most important duties of the Government.

In the event of natural disasters, turmoil and other emergencies overseas, the Defense Minister may order JSDF units to rescue or transport Japanese nationals and others overseas upon request from the Minister for Foreign Affairs and upon subsequent consultations with the Minister. For this reason, the MOD/JSDF closely cooperates with MOFA and other relevant ministries and agencies on a regular basis to ensure preparedness to be able to respond to any situations.

See Part II, Chapter 4, 3-8 (Rescue and Transportation of Japanese Nationals Overseas (R/TJNO)), Reference 21 (Transportation of Japanese Nationals and Others Overseas by the Japan Self-Defense Forces)

2 Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF

For prompt and appropriate implementation of rescue or transportation of Japanese nationals and others overseas, the JSDF maintains readiness to dispatch its units swiftly.

In addition, as close coordination among the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF is necessary when carrying rescue or transportation of Japanese nationals and others overseas, regular training is conducted to improve coordination procedures and capabilities. Such training is conducted both domestically and abroad with relevant organizations. During the annual multilateral joint exercise Cobra Gold in Thailand, a series of activities for rescue of Japanese nationals and others overseas (RJNO) are practiced with the cooperation of relevant ministries and agencies, the Embassy of Japan in Thailand, and others, thereby strengthening cooperation with the MOD/JSDF and MOFA.

To date, the MOD/JSDF has conducted a total of eight operations for transportation of Japanese nationals and others overseas (TJNO). Recently, the MOD/JSDF is on standby to transport Japanese nationals and others overseas in response to the deteriorating situation in the Middle East. Specifically, two C-2 transport aircraft were moved to the Republic of Djibouti in June and July 2025, and one KC-767 aerial refueling and transport aircraft was moved to the Republic of Maldives in March 2026, with both placed on standby.

See Reference 22 (Record of Transportation of Japanese Nationals and Others Overseas)

3 Initiatives to Ensure the Safety of Japanese Nationals Overseas in the Middle East and Africa Regions

To date, the MOD/JSDF has utilized the facility in the Republic of Djibouti, which is used by the JSDF's counter-piracy unit, for TJNO.

In light of this experience, the NSS indicates, "…while gaining understanding from the Government of Djibouti, the JSDF facility there, which has been in operation for counter-piracy activities, will be also utilized to protect Japanese nationals overseas." Subsequently, the Djibouti facility was again utilized in 2023 for TJNO from Sudan. Given these cases, the possibility cannot be ruled out that in the future, rescue or transportation of Japanese nationals overseas may be required in the Middle East and Africa. Therefore, in 2023, the Cabinet approved the "Government Initiative to Ensure the Safety of Japanese Nationals Overseas in the Middle East and Africa."

In response, a new mission establishing temporary arrangements for the possible R/TJNO was assigned to counter-piracy unit, such as the accumulation and management of equipment, defense cooperation and exchanges, information gathering and analysis, and other such activities utilizing the Djibouti facility. The MOD/JSDF will take all possible measures to ensure the safety of Japanese nationals overseas.

See Reference 23 (Government Initiative to Ensure the Safety of Japanese Nationals Overseas in the Middle East and Africa)

Section 4 Training and Exercises to Reinforce Japan's Architecture for National Defense

1 Training to Reinforce Japan's Deterrence and Response Capabilities

In order for the Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces (MOD/JSDF) to fulfil its mission of defending Japan, it is essential for all personnel and every unit, which is the core of the defense force, to maintain a high level of training and improve upon their skills on a regular basis. It can be said that a high level of capabilities and skills is the foundation of our nation's deterrence and response capabilities.

The MOD/JSDF actively conducts various high-level bilateral/multilateral training and exercises, and various exercises involving other ministries and local governments to further improve deterrence and response capabilities.

See Fig. III-1-4-1 (Major Training Undertaken by Japan and the Japan-U.S. Alliance), Chapter 2, Section 5 (Japan-U.S. Bilateral Training and Exercises), Chapter 3, Section 2 (Training and Exercises with Like-Minded Countries)

Fig. III-1-4-1 Major Training Undertaken by Japan and the Japan-U.S. Alliance



1 Joint Training of the JSDF

It is of paramount importance that the JSDF be prepared to seamlessly and fully demonstrate its deterrence and response capabilities through repeated training involving joint operations of each JSDF service on a routine basis.

To this end, the JSDF has been conducting JSDF joint exercises to rehearse joint operations by alternating between **field training exercises** and **command post exercises** almost every year. In addition, in order to respond to various disasters in an expeditious and appropriate manner, the JSDF organizes various disaster prevention drills while also actively participating in disaster prevention drills organized by the Japanese Government and local governments as part of its efforts to strengthen cooperation with various ministries and agencies, local governments, etc.

Furthermore, the JSDF has been conducting training regularly so that it can immediately rescue or transport Japanese nationals overseas, in emergency situations.

(1) JSDF Joint Exercises (JX)

In October 2025, the JSDF conducted the SDF Joint Exercise 2025 (field training exercise). This was the first field training exercise conducted since the establishment of the JSDF Joint Operations Command, and it aimed to maintain and enhance the JSDF's joint operational capabilities through exercises jointly conducted by the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF. The United States Armed Forces and the Australian Defence Force participated in parts of the exercise to enhance interoperability among the three countries.

(2) Joint Exercise for Rescue (JXR)

In order to maintain and enhance its disaster response capabilities, the JSDF conducts disaster drills revolving around its command and staff activities in the event of a large-scale earthquake, the coordination between major units, and its coordination with disaster prevention organizations as well as the U.S. Forces Japan. In the training conducted in July 2025, an earthquake directly under the Tokyo metropolitan area was assumed. Training was conducted on the command and staff activities of the JSDF as well as cooperation with disaster-related organizations, the U.S. military, and the Australian military, aiming to enhance the disaster response capabilities of the JSDF while incorporating new methods such as information and communication technology (ICT) and AI.

KEY WORD **Field Training Exercise**

An exercise in which units are physically deployed and trained at a maneuver area or other such location.

KEY WORD **Command Post Exercise**

An exercise conducted primarily by staff officers at headquarters in a tabletop format.

(3) Tomodachi Rescue Exercise/Remote Island Disaster Exercise (TREX/RIDEX)

The JSDF conducts field training exercises on responding to sudden large-scale disasters on remote islands to maintain and enhance the JSDF's ability to respond to disasters on remote islands as well as strengthen collaboration with the U.S. and Australian militaries, disaster management organizations, and others. In November 2025, in tandem with the FY2025 Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Niijima Village Joint Comprehensive Disaster Prevention Training, a joint exercise was conducted with the U.S. Forces Japan and the Australian military to rehearse responses to sudden large-scale disasters in remote islands and other areas expected to become isolated communities. The exercise aimed to maintain and enhance joint Japan-U.S.-Australia disaster response capabilities for such areas, while also strengthening cooperation with local governments and disaster prevention agencies.

(4) Drills for Medical Treatment Activities Following a Large-Scale Earthquake

The MOD/JSDF participates in drills organized by the Cabinet Office involving medical treatment activities to be carried out in the aftermath of a large-scale earthquake, and maintains and enhances its disaster response capabilities by rehearsing various actions for disaster relief and coordination procedures with disaster prevention. These drills conducted in September 2025, in which field training exercises were conducted based on the hypothetical scenario of trench-type earthquakes in the vicinity of the Japan and Chishima Trenches, saw participation from the MOD/JSDF and other relevant organizations (National Police Agency; Fire and Disaster Management Agency; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare [including Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT)]; Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism; and the Japan Coast Guard, etc.), as well as several local governments (Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, and Ishikawa Prefectures).

(5) JSDF Joint eXercise Overseas (JXO)

From November to December 2025, with the cooperation of Djibouti and Jordan, the JSDF conducted training on the rescue of Japanese nationals overseas in actual operating environment in the Middle East and Africa. This training aimed to enhance joint operational capabilities and strengthen coordination between the JSDF, related agencies, and each country's armed forces when responding to contingencies.

See Section 3-8 (Responses to Rescue and Transportation of Japanese Nationals Overseas (R/TJNO)), Chapter 3, Section 1-2-11 (15) (Jordan), Chapter 3, Section 1-2-12 (2) (Djibouti)

VOICE

ICT and AI Use in the JSDF's Joint Exercise for Rescue, with an Eye Toward Next-Generation Disaster Responses

NISHI Yusuke, Assistant Director for Disaster Relief Operations, Joint Staff (Ichigaya)

In recent years, natural disasters have grown in scale and complexity, making it increasingly important to make prompt and accurate decisions about disaster responses, as well as ensuring seamless information sharing and coordinated responses by relevant organizations. With an eye toward next-generation disaster responses in preparation for future anticipated large-scale disasters, the JSDF has been introducing ICT and AI into its Joint Exercise for Rescue (JXR). During the exercise, the Disaster Response Headquarters established at the MOD proper serves as the hub from which information-sharing tools are utilized to visualize the operational situation and monitor progress centrally. In addition, AI is used to help with document preparation and other tasks, with a view to enhancing coordination among staff members who support the decision making and streamlining operations.

By transitioning away from traditional work practices centered on paper documents and handwritten notes, these initiatives aim to enable uniformed personnel and defense officials to combine their efforts and operate collectively under a new information infrastructure. Furthermore, by coordinating information not only within the MOD but also with relevant organizations, the initiatives aim to ensure highly effective disaster response capabilities.

Going forward, we will continue to share the insights and methodologies acquired through the JXR with relevant organizations and contribute to the further improvement of disaster response capabilities across the government.



Uniformed personnel and defense officials jointly responding to a disaster under a new information infrastructure

REFERENCE: Unit training in the JSDF
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/defense/training/index.html

REFERENCE: Joint exercises and training
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/js/activity/training.html

REFERENCE: Overview of GSDF education and training
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/gsdf/about/training/index.html

REFERENCE: MSDF training and exercise
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/operation/training/

REFERENCE: ASDF exercises
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/asdf/report/cat-kunren/

2 Training of Each JSDF Service

To fully leverage defense capabilities achieved through integration, it is crucial for each JSDF service to maintain a high level of readiness. For this reason, each JSDF service continuously conducts both personnel training on an individual basis and unit training as an organization, which together form the foundation of a powerful JSDF.

(1) Ground Self Defense Force

The GSDF conducts field training exercises at the regional army level to improve its response capabilities for various contingencies and other situations. In addition, the GSDF conducts various exercises including the Fuji Fire Power Exercise,[1] parachute drop training from U.S. Air Force and other aircraft in Japan and overseas, training for amphibious operations, and live-fire training for medium-range SAM/SSM (surface-to-air missile/surface-to-surface missile) units to enhance various tactical skills necessary for joint cross-domain operations.

(2) Maritime Self Defense Force

The MSDF conducts training between naval units, and between naval vessels, aircraft (including the ASDF) and ground units (including the GSDF), as well as mine warfare training and joint training with the Japan Coast Guard in Japan, and deployment training that leverages superior U.S. training infrastructure with the cooperation of the U.S. Navy in order to improve various tactical capabilities. During the JMSDF ANNUAL Exercise 2025 (field training exercise (multilateral exercise)) conducted in October 2025, exercises focused on improving the MSDF's mission execution capabilities, as well as the tactical judgment of commanders and unit operational procedures. Efforts were also made to strengthen cooperation with the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Marine Corps, the Royal Australian Navy and Air Force, the Royal Canadian Navy and Air Force, the Royal New Zealand Air Force, and the French Navy.

(3) Air Self Defense Force

The ASDF focuses on enhancing the professional expertise of its personnel in phases in order to fully utilize equipment with cutting-edge technologies, such as fighter aircraft, radars, surface-to-air guided missiles, etc. It also conducts unit-specific training and training on inter-unit coordination procedures involving units, such as fighter units, air warning and control units, and surface-to-air guided missile units, as well as comprehensive training that includes air transport units and air rescue units.

2 Establishing the Respective Training Environments and Safety Management

1 Training Environment

In order to improve the quality of training, JSDF training has been planned and conducted under conditions that are as close as possible to actual combat situations, yet it is necessary to further enhance the training environment in order to maintain and enhance the readiness of the JSDF. It is against this background that the MOD/JSDF is promoting initiatives to enhance the training infrastructure in Japan and abroad to conduct efficient and effective training and exercises.

As part of these efforts, the MOD/JSDF is working to expand the establishment and utilization of domestic maneuver areas in Hokkaido and elsewhere. Furthermore, the JSDF is also facilitating expanded joint use of U.S. Forces facilities and areas located in Japan by the JSDF while accounting for relations with local communities. Furthermore, the JSDF will facilitate the use of places other than JSDF facilities or U.S. Forces facilities and areas, and the utilization of excellent training environments overseas, such as the U.S. and Australia, and introduce simulators actively.

Elsewhere, facilities are in the process of being established on Mageshima (Kagoshima Prefecture), where the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces will be able to conduct training and other activities.

Furthermore, in order to maximize the capabilities of the JSDF in any situation, based on the belief that it is necessary to conduct training using civilian airports regularly, ASDF fighter aircraft trainings are conducted at civilian airports.

(1) Ground Self Defense Force

Maneuver areas and ranges are unevenly located and do not have sufficient space. Thus, it is challenging for the GSDF is conduct exercises with large units or artillery training with extended-range cannons for example. These constraints tend to grow as equipment is modernized. There are also constraints imposed by the urbanization of the areas surrounding maneuver areas and ranges.

Due to these circumstances, the GSDF conducts some of the live-fire training of surface-to-air guided missile units and surface-to-ship guided missile units in the United States and the like, as training facilities in Japan are limited. In addition, the GSDF is improving its tactical skills through participation

1 This is also utilized as an opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of recruitment and employment support by opening it to prospective recruits and supportive companies that assist with post-service re-employment, as well as by streaming the exercise online as part of proactive external communication.

in field training by utilizing excellent training bases that are not available in Japan, such as multilateral joint exercises overseas.

In addition, it conducts field training exercises at the division and regional army levels by maximizing the use of limited domestic maneuver areas, and also conducts more practical training outside of JSDF facilities and areas while obtaining the understanding and cooperation of local communities.

(2) Maritime Self Defense Force

The timing and location for using sea areas for training around Japan are limited by such factors as weather, ocean conditions, marine traffic, and fisheries.

Because of this, for example, training that must be conducted in relatively shallow sea areas, such as minesweeping training and submarine rescue training, is being conducted in places such as parts of Mutsu Bay, Sagami Bay, and the Sumo-nada Sea. In June 2025, an unmanned vehicle-based live underwater mine disposal test was conducted for the first time off Iwo-To.

Furthermore, with the increase in the number of overseas missions, the MSDF also strives to conduct training systematically and efficiently so that a large number of units will be able to produce training results in a short amount of time. Through participation in multilateral exercises conducted overseas and entering the same training areas, and bilateral and multilateral exercises etc., when returning to base, we are working to improve efficient and effective tactical skills and strengthen cooperation and response capabilities with our ally and like-minded countries.

(3) Air Self Defense Force

Since much of the training airspace surrounding Japan is not broad enough, the performance and features of aircraft cannot be fully demonstrated in some trainings. In addition, long trips to and from the training airspace are required in the case of some bases. Furthermore, in operating airports, it is necessary to take great care regarding aircraft noise in conducting early morning and nighttime flight training.

For this reason, the ASDF conducts live-fire and bombing training, as an example, through joint use of USFJ firing and bombing ranges. In addition, the service also endeavors to utilize overseas training environments, such as the Patriot missile live-fire training conducted in the United States by their aviation and air defense units.

See Reference 24 (List of Maneuver Areas), Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

2 Initiatives for Safety Management, Etc.

The MOD/JSDF constantly strives as one for safety management, such as by implementing the highest level of safety measures and precautions during routine training.

In November 2024, a fire broke out on the MSDF minesweeper Ukushima while it was navigating north of Oshima off the coast of Fukuoka Prefecture for training purposes, resulting in the vessel sinking. In April 2026, the accident investigation results were released, concluding that the accident was caused by a (presumed) fire originating from a fuel oil leak at a joint in the main generator's fuel return line, combined with the inability to extinguish the fire onboard due to insufficient proficiency in procedures for shutting down the main engine and other systems in the event of onboard power outages, and inadequate guidelines for extinguishing engine room fires. As recurrence prevention, every effort will be made to implement measures such as repairing the joints in main generator fuel return lines; conducting thorough, practical drills based on scenarios involving engine room fires and power outages; and dispersing emergency response equipment across multiple locations.

In February 2025, during a live-fire exercise using a FH70 155mm howitzer at the Aibano Maneuver Area, an incident occurred in which the point of impact of one round could not be located near the perimeter of the maneuver area. The incident investigation results were released, stating that the incident was caused by an increase in the shell's propulsive force resulting from the use of two propellant charges instead of the single charge required, which was due to inadequate basic and fundamental procedures, as well as shortcomings in guidance, supervision, and readiness management. As a recurrence prevention measure, the GSDF conducted safety checks on all firearms, ensure strict adherence to fundamental procedures, strengthen supervision and oversight, and enhance training proficiency management throughout the service.

In May 2025, a T-4 training aircraft belonging to the ASDF's 5th Air Wing crashed into Lake Iruka in Inuyama City, Aichi Prefecture, while en route from Prefectural Nagoya Airfield (Aichi Prefecture) to Nyutabaru Air Base (Miyazaki Prefecture), resulting in the death of two crew members. The cause of the accident is currently under investigation.

Also in May 2025, an accident occurred at Miho Air Base (Tottori Prefecture) during the inspection and maintenance of an aerial work platform, in which one crew member died after becoming caught between the lift and the vehicle body.

In this way, any accident and incidents that may cause injury to Japanese nationals, damage their property, or lead to the loss of life of JSDF personnel, must be prevented at all costs. After thoroughly investigating the causes of these accidents and incidents, the MOD/JSDF will ensure that each and every member of JSDF personnel is reminded of the latest safety management guidelines. At the same time, the MOD/JSDF as a whole will make every effort to ensure safety in the operation of vessels, aircraft, vehicles, etc., through conducting safety education for JSDF personnel and the steady maintenance of equipment, etc., so as to ensure that public confidence is not undermined.

Chapter 2

Japan-U.S. Alliance

Section 1 Outline of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements

1 Significance of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements

1 Maintenance of Japan's Peace and Security

In the current international community, a robust defense system capable of responding to every contingency, ranging from all types of aggression, including the use of nuclear weapons, to coercion or intimidation by military power, is necessary to secure the peace, security, and sovereignty of the nation.

However, it is difficult even for the United States to guarantee its security on its own. Much more than that, it would be difficult for Japan to ensure its national security solely through its unilateral efforts given its population, land, and economy.

Consequently, Japan has maintained its peace, security, and independence centered on the Security Arrangements with the United States, the world's dominant military power, 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.

Specifically, Japan and the United States will take bilateral action in the event of an armed attack against Japan, based on the provisions of Article 5 of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, and Japan will provide facilities and areas for the U.S. Forces, based on the provisions of Article 6 of the treaty. If a nation plans to attack Japan, the attacker must be prepared to confront not only the defense capability of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), but also the overwhelming military strength of the United States, due to the U.S. obligation to defend Japan in the event of an armed attack. As a result, the opposing nation clearly recognizes that it will suffer grievously if it carries out an invasion, and such desires will be abandoned at the planning stage. In other words, this serves as deterrence against attacks.

Japan intends to create a seamless posture and secure its peace and security by effectively utilizing the deterrence capabilities of the U.S. military together with Japan's own national defense architecture.

2 Maintenance of Peace and Stability in the Region surrounding Japan

Article 6 of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty states that the purpose of the use of facilities and areas by the U.S. Forces in Japan is to contribute to the security of Japan and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East. This provision is based on the recognition that the security of Japan is closely tied to the peace and security of the Far East region to which Japan belongs.

In the regions surrounding Japan, there are many states and the like with massive military power, including some that retain nuclear weapons or continue nuclear development. In addition, uncertainty over the existing order is increasing due to changes in the balance of power. The so-called gray zone situations harbor the risk of rapidly developing into graver situations without showing clear indications.

In such security environment, the presence of U.S. Forces in Japan provides deterrence against unexpected contingencies caused by various security issues or destabilizing factors, not only protecting the interests of Japan and the United States but also providing a great sense of security to the nations in the region and thus fulfilling a role of public goods.

Also, the Japan-U.S. Alliance based on the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements constitutes the foundation of the United States' commitment to the peace and stability of the region surrounding Japan. These arrangements, complemented by the alliances established between the United States and other countries in the region such as the Republic of Korea (ROK), Australia, Thailand, and the Philippines, and also by the friendly relations developed with other countries, play an indispensable role in maintaining the peace and stability of the region.

3 Responding to Global Issues

The Japan-U.S. Alliance also contributes to Japan's ability to implement positive efforts to maintain the peace and security of the international community, including the promotion

of multinational security dialogue and cooperation, and cooperation with the United Nations.

Currently, we are confronted with global security challenges that are difficult for any single country to tackle alone, including risks concerning stable use of the seas, outer space and cyberspace, acts of piracy, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, and international terrorism, and it is important for countries to work together from peacetime. The strong bonds forged between Japan and the United States are also playing an important role in the efforts implemented by Japan to effectively respond to such challenges.

In particular, under the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements, the JSDF and the U.S. Forces are working together in peacetime in a variety of areas to strengthen their cooperation. This close coordination lays the foundation for various forms of global collaboration such as counter-piracy, undertaken by the JSDF and the U.S. Forces, and leads to enhancement of the operational effectiveness of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements.

The peace and prosperity of the international community are closely linked to those of Japan. Accordingly, by advancing initiatives for resolving global issues in cooperation with the United States, which has remarkable operational capabilities, Japan will be able to further ensure its security and prosperity.

2 Content of the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation

The "Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation" (the Guidelines), which show the general outline and policy direction of roles and cooperation between Japan and the United States, were formulated in 1978, and successively revised in 1997 and 2015. The current Guidelines, which were revised in 2015, update the general framework and policy direction for the roles and missions of the two countries, as well as modernizing the Alliance. The Guidelines also manifest a strategic vision for a more robust Alliance and greater shared responsibilities by enhancing its deterrence and response capabilities in all phases, from peacetime to contingencies.

The Guidelines define that Japan and the United States will work on a variety of measures during peacetime, including intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) activities, air and missile defense, maritime security, training and exercises, asset protection, and logistics support, and cooperate in such activities as response to a large-scale disaster in Japan to seamlessly ensure Japan's peace and security. For regional and global peace and security, the Guidelines also require both countries: to cooperate in international activities and promote and improve trilateral and multilateral cooperation; to cooperate on space and cyberspace; and to develop and enhance bilateral enterprise through defense equipment and technology cooperation as well as intelligence cooperation and information security for further improving the effectiveness of bilateral cooperation.

See Reference 26 (The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation); Reference 27 (Chronology of the Japan-U.S. Alliance)

3 Policy Consultations between Japan and the United States

Japan and the United States have maintained close coordination at multiple levels, including the summit level and ministerial level, and have continually strengthened and expanded cooperative relations for the peace, stability and prosperity not only for the two countries but also for the entire international community, including the Indo-Pacific region.

Close policy consultations on security are conducted between officials in charge of defense and foreign affairs at various levels through meetings such as the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (SCC, or Japan-U.S. "2+2"), the Japan-U.S. Security Subcommittee (SSC), and the Subcommittee for Defense Cooperation (SDC). As the ministerial consultations among the top officials in charge of defense and foreign affairs of the two countries, the "2+2" Meeting represents such policy consultations, and functions as an important consultative panel.

In addition, seizing several opportunities, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) organizes Japan-U.S. defense ministerial meetings where discussions are made with a focus on the defense policies of the respective governments and defense cooperation, and furthermore, MOD officials, including Vice-Defense Minister and respective Chiefs of Staff of the JSDF, have working-level meetings and exchange opinions, etc. on a regular basis.

In order to further improve the credibility of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements, the MOD is actively conducting such consultations and other activities to share information and views between Japan and the United States, and to discuss specific measures to further strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance.

1 Recent Japan-U.S. Summit Meetings

In October 2025, Prime Minister Takaichi held a Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting with President Trump during his visit to Japan. The two leaders concurred to advance a broad-range of security cooperation in order to further enhance deterrence

and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. They also opposed unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, and concurred to work closely between Japan and the U.S. They reiterated the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. The two leaders shared their views on the situation regarding North Korea, and affirmed the need to address its nuclear and missile issues together, as well as their resolute commitment to the complete denuclearization of North Korea.

In November 2025, a Japan-U.S. Summit Telephone Talk was held, in which the two leaders exchanged views on strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance and the situation and various challenges facing the Indo-Pacific Region, and affirmed that the two countries will continue working closely under the current international situation. In addition, in January 2026, a Japan-U.S. Summit Telephone Talk was held, in which Prime Minister Takaichi offered her congratulations on the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, and the two leaders affirmed that they will make this momentous anniversary a year in which they carve out a new chapter in the history of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and that they will further deepen Japan-U.S. cooperation.

Moreover, in March 2026, Prime Minister Takaichi visited the United States and held a Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting. During the meeting, Prime Minister Takaichi and President Trump, building on the strong mutual trust between them, affirmed that they would advance high-quality Japan-U.S. cooperation in concrete terms across a wide range of areas including security, elevate the Japan-U.S. Alliance to further heights, and advance a broad range of security cooperation, including co-development and co-production of missiles.



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

2 Recent Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meetings

In May 2025, then Defense Minister Nakatani held a Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting with U.S. Secretary of War Hegseth in Singapore. Based on their exchange at the Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting in March 2025, the Ministers discussed Japan-U.S. defense cooperation initiatives, including the following recent developments. The Ministers confirmed that they will coordinate closely together to align the strategic priorities of both countries as the U.S. Department of War formulates a new National Defense Strategy. They also concurred to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in the cyber domain.

In October 2025, Defense Minister Koizumi held a Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting with U.S. Secretary of War Hegseth at the MOD. The Ministers candidly exchanged and shared their views on the increasingly severe security situation in the Indo-Pacific, and confirmed that they will further strengthen the Alliance capabilities to deter and respond. Specifically, (1) with regard to upgrading respective command and control frameworks, the Ministers welcomed tangible progress in the upgrade of U.S. Forces Japan and on initiatives by the JSDF Joint Operations Command, and confirmed their intention to further enhance effective bilateral cooperation from peacetime to contingency; (2) the Ministers welcomed the progress and confirmed on expansion of bilateral joint presence in the southwestern region of Japan as one of the highest priorities of the Alliance, including enhancement of more advanced and realistic bilateral training across Japan, and in the southwestern region in particular; and (3) with regard to defense equipment and technology cooperation, the Ministers recognized that strengthening the defense production and technological base is a shared challenge, and reaffirmed the importance of mutually complementing the defense production and technological bases of Japan and the United States. The Ministers welcomed the progress under Defense Industrial Cooperation, Acquisition, and Sustainment (DICAS), including exploring missile co-production such as Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAM) and co-sustainment of vessels and aircraft of U.S. forces, and confirmed to further advance these initiatives; and (4) in addition, the Ministers concurred that they will continue to advance multilateral cooperation including information sharing and operational collaboration with regional partners, namely Australia, the Republic of Korea and the Philippines, with Japan and the U.S. at the center of such cooperation.

In addition, in order to maintain deterrence and mitigate the impact on local communities, the Ministers reiterated the vital importance of the steady implementation of the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, in accordance with the Okinawa Consolidation Plan and other existing bilateral arrangements, such as the return of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma including the construction of the Futenma Replacement Facility at Henoko as the only solution that avoids the continued use of MCAS Futenma. The Ministers also concurred to advance cooperation to prevent recurrence of incidents and accidents involving U.S. Forces in Japan.

In November 2025, the Ministers held a Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting in Malaysia. The Ministers

exchanged views on the U.S. National Defense Strategy, as well as on the U.S. approval for the Republic of Korea to build a nuclear powered submarine. They also discussed the importance of trilateral defense cooperation among Japan, the United States, and the Republic of Korea, and the need to further enhance collaboration among like-minded countries, centered around the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and pursue tangible initiatives to strengthen deterrence. Finally, the Ministers concurred to continue strengthening the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance with a sense of speed.

Subsequently, in December 2025, the Ministers held a telephone conference in which they exchanged views on the increasingly severe security situation in the Indo-Pacific region, including the radar illumination incident against JSDF aircraft by Chinese military aircraft that occurred earlier that month. In addition, the Ministers expressed serious concern over any actions to increase regional tensions, as China's actions are not conducive to regional peace and stability, and concurred to closely communicate and collaborate with each other.

In January 2026, the Ministers held a Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting in the United States, where they concurred to promote various initiatives to further strengthen Japan-U.S. Alliance capabilities to deter and respond, with a sense of urgency and speed, in order to respond to challenges posed by the changing security environment. In particular, with regard to the expansion of the bilateral joint presence in the southwestern region of Japan, based on the progress in measures to reinforce the JSDF's defense capabilities, the Ministers confirmed that they will make further efforts including the enhancement of more advanced and realistic bilateral training across Japan, and in the southwestern region in particular, as one of the highest priorities of the Alliance. In addition, with regard to defense equipment and technology cooperation, the Ministers concurred to work more closely together, and Defense Minister Koizumi emphasized the importance of moving forward with holding the next iteration of Defense Industrial Cooperation, Acquisition, and Sustainment (DICAS) as early as possible. The Ministers then discussed the necessity of enhancing cooperation in Integrated Air Missile Defense capabilities and in the space domain. In addition, in order to maintain deterrence and mitigate the impact on local communities, they reiterated the vital importance of the steady implementation of the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan in accordance with the Okinawa Consolidation Plan and other existing bilateral arrangements, such as the return of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma including the construction of the Futenma Replacement Facility at Henoko, as the only solution that avoids the continued use of MCAS Futenma. The Ministers also concurred to advance cooperation to prevent recurrence of incidents and accidents involving U.S. forces in Japan.



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

See Fig. III-2-1-1 (Major Consultations on Policies Held between Japanese and U.S. Government Officials concerning Japan-U.S. Security Issues); Section 2 (Strengthening the Joint Deterrence and Response Capabilities of Japan and the United States); Part IV, Chapter 3, Section 2 (Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation and Related Initiatives with the United States); Reference 28 (Japan-U.S. (Minister-Level) Consultations (Since 2022)); Reference 29 (Joint Statement of the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee (U.S.-Japan "2+2")); Reference 30 (Joint Statement of the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (the Japan-U.S. "2+2") (Outline) (July 2024))

Fig. III-2-1-1 Major Consultations on Policies Held between Japanese and U.S. Government Officials concerning Japan-U.S. Security Issues

Consultative Forum	Participants		Purpose	Legal Basis
	Japanese Side	U.S. Side		
Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (SCC) Security Consultative Committee (Japan–U.S. "2+2")	Minister for Foreign Affairs, Defense Minister	U.S. Secretary of State, U.S. Secretary of Defense (Note 1)	Study of matters which would promote understanding between the Japanese and U.S. Governments and contribute to the strengthening of cooperative relations in the areas of security, which form the basis of security and are related to security	Established on the basis of letters exchanged between the Prime Minister of Japan and the U.S. Secretary of State on January 19, 1960, in accordance with Article IV of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty
Security Subcommittee (SSC)	Participants are not specified (Note 2)	Participants are not specified (Note 2)	Exchange of views on security issues of mutual concern to Japan and the United States	Article IV of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and others
Subcommittee for Defense Cooperation (SDC) (Note 3)	Director-General of the North American Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Director-General of the Bureau of Defense Policy, Ministry of Defense, and Representative of Joint Staff	Assistant Secretary of State, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Representative from: the U.S. Embassy in Japan, USFJ, Joint Staff, USINDOPACOM	Study and consideration of consultative measures to Japan and the United States including guidelines to ensure consistent joint responses covering the activities of the JSDF and USFJ in emergencies	Established in the 16th Security Consultative Committee on July 8, 1976 as a subentry under the Committee Reorganized in the Japan-U.S. vice-ministerial level consultation on June 28, 1996
Japan-U.S. Joint Committee (JC)	Director-General of North American Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Director-General of the Bureau of Policies for Regional Society, Ministry of Defense, and others	Deputy Commander of USFJ, Minister at the U.S. Embassy, and others	Consultation concerning implementation of the Status of Forces Agreement	Article XXV of the Status of Forces Agreement

(Notes) 1 The U.S. side was headed by the U.S. Ambassador to Japan and the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command before December 26, 1990.
2 Meetings are held from time to time between working-level officials of the two Governments, such as officials corresponding in rank to vice-minister or assistant secretary.
3 A Council of Deputies consisting of Deputy-Director General and Deputy Assistant Secretaries was established when the SDC was reorganized on June 28, 1996.

Section 2 Strengthening the Joint Deterrence and Response Capabilities of Japan and the United States

Japan's National Defense Strategy (NDS) and the United States' National Defense Strategy are well aligned in prioritizing the prevention of unilateral changes to the status quo by force through integrating all approaches and means. Accordingly, from the viewpoint of reinforcing readiness and resiliency, imposing costs on opponents, and deterring invasion against Japan, Japan will further deepen discussion with the United States on their respective roles, missions, and capabilities, and further reinforce the joint deterrence capabilities of both countries in an integrated manner.[1]

Specifically, Japan will further deepen cooperation with the United States to smoothly implement allied cross-domain operations including space, cyber and the electromagnetic domains, as well as to improve interoperability. Regarding Japan's counterstrike capabilities, Japan will work with the United States to establish a cooperative posture, including information gathering, in order to employ their joint capabilities more effectively. Furthermore, the bilateral collaboration will be reinforced in such areas as air-defense; anti-surface warfare; anti-submarine warfare; mine warfare; amphibious operations; airborne operations; intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting (ISRT); protection of assets and facilities; and logistics support.

In order to effectively realize the division of roles and missions between Japan and the United States in light of the fundamental reinforcement of Japan's defense capabilities, Japan will ensure close operational cooperation with the United States through Japan-U.S. bilateral planning. In addition, Japan will work to improve allied response capabilities, including readiness and interoperability of the Alliance, through more advanced and practical exercises and training.

Furthermore, in order to ensure that U.S. extended deterrence with nuclear deterrence at its core remains credible and resilient, Japan will further actively engage in and deepen bilateral discussions on extended deterrence, including those at the ministerial level.

In order to deter unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts as well as to deter various contingencies from occurring, Japan will further expand and evolve operations such as bilateral flexible deterrent options (FDO)[2] and joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) as joint measures between Japan and the United States in peacetime. In order to effectively conduct these operations, Japan will actively make efforts such as promoting participation of like-minded countries and others as well as having the JSDF protect assets, namely U.S. vessels and aircraft.

Furthermore, as part of efforts to strengthen allied deterrence and response capabilities, Japan will on a regular basis increase joint use of Japanese and U.S. facilities, promote mutual deployment of both countries' units to the other country's facilities for training, and make other efforts.

1 Cooperation in the Space and Cyber Domains

Japan's NDS states that Japan and the United States will further deepen efforts to enhance cooperation and interoperability for the smooth implementation of Japan-U.S. joint cross-domain operations, including in the space, cyber, and electromagnetic domain. It was confirmed at the 2023 Japan-U.S. SCC ("2+2") that both sides consider that attacks to, from, or within space present a clear challenge to the security of the Alliance, and affirmed such attacks, in certain circumstances, could lead to the invocation of Article V of the Japan-U.S. Treaty.

In addition, in December 2024, the U.S. military newly established the United States Space Forces – Japan (USSPACEFOR-JPN) at Yokota Air Base (Tokyo) to provide expertise on space domain-related matters to the entire U.S. Forces Japan and to facilitate coordination with relevant Japanese ministries and agencies, including the MOD/JSDF.

Moreover, through working groups on the electromagnetic spectrum between the Japan-U.S. defense authorities as well as other means, the two countries are strengthening bilateral cooperation in the electromagnetic spectrum.

Japan and the United States also exchange information on topics such as the use of AI in the area of security as well as multilateral challenges. Additionally, in order to further reinforce information sharing at all levels, Japan will fundamentally reinforce efforts related to information security and cybersecurity so that Japan and the United States can fully employ their capabilities. During the Japan-U.S. Defense Ministers' Meeting in May 2025, then Defense Minister Nakatani explained to U.S. Secretary of War Hegseth Japan's initiatives to improve its cybersecurity capabilities, including the

1 It should be noted that there is no change in the facts that all activities of the JSDF will be conducted pursuant to the Constitution of Japan, domestic laws and regulations, etc. under the independent judgments of Japan as a sovereign nation, and that the JSDF and the U.S. forces will each act according to their own independent chain of command.

2 Deterrent measures that can be flexibly selected

enactment of the Cyber Response Capability Strengthening Act. The Ministers then concurred to further strengthen Japan-U.S. bilateral cooperation in the cyber domain.

See Chapter 1, Section 1-1-4 (Responses in the Space Domain); Chapter 1, Section 1-1-5 (Responses in the Cyber Domain); Chapter 1, Section 1-1-6 (Responses in the Electromagnetic Spectrum Domain)

2 Integrated Air and Missile Defense

Regarding the response to airborne threats coming to Japan, such as ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and aircraft, Japan-U.S. bilateral response capabilities have been enhanced by conducting Japan-U.S. bilateral joint air defense and missile defense exercises in addition to sharing operational information and establishing response procedures. In addition, Japan and the United States are cooperating in the event of North Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches by utilizing the Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM).

In the Missile Defense Review (MDR) released in 2022, the United States clearly indicated the importance of cooperation with allies, including Japan.

See Chapter 1, Section 1-1-3 (Responses to Ballistic Missile Attacks)

3 Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Activities

With regard to joint ISR activities, it is important to implement such activities broadly in the Asia-Pacific region with cooperation between Japan and the United States to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the activities of both countries.

The expansion of these bilateral ISR activities will function as deterrence, and will also ensure information superiority over other nations and enable the establishment of a seamless cooperation structure throughout all phases from peacetime to contingencies. At the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee ("2+2") held in July 2024, both sides confirmed steady progress in Japan-U.S. cooperation on intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR). The two sides also recognized the achievements of the Bilateral Information Analysis Cell (BIAC) and concurred to strengthen and expand BIAC through continued discussions on future cooperative efforts.

4 Asset Protection for the U.S. Forces and Other Forces

Article 95-2 of the Self-Defense Forces Act states that the JSDF is authorized to protect assets for U.S. Forces and other forces engaged in activities to help defend Japan in cooperation with the JSDF. In 2025, JSDF vessels provided protection for U.S. Forces' vessels 4 times during intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance activities, including the surveillance of ballistic missiles; protection during bilateral/multilateral exercises was provided by JSDF vessels for U.S. Forces' vessels and by JSDF aircraft for U.S. Forces' aircraft 2 and 3 times, respectively.

See Chapter 3, Section 1-2-1 (Australia); Part II, Chapter 4, 3-9 (Asset Protection for the U.S. Forces and Other Forces); Reference 25 (Track Record of Asset Protection for the U.S Forces and Other Forces (SDF Law Article 95-2))

5 Logistics Support

The Japan-U.S. Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) is an agreement designed to positively contribute to the smooth and effective operation of the Japan-U.S. Treaty and United Nations efforts to promote international peace. Its scope of application includes various occasions such as bilateral training and exercises in peacetime, disaster relief activities, international peace cooperation assignments, international disaster relief activities, and armed attack situation. If either the JSDF or the U.S. Forces request the other party to provide supplies or services, the Agreement, in principle, allows the requested party to do so.[3]

The same framework, such as the settlement procedures

3 The categories of supplies and services as provided under the Agreement include: food; water; billeting; transportation (including airlifts); petroleum, oils, and lubricants; clothing; communications; medical services; base support; storage services; use of facilities; training services; spare parts and components; repair and maintenance services; airport and seaport services; and ammunition (provision of weapons is not included).

previously used under the Japan-U.S. ACSA can be applied to the provision of supplies and services that had become possible under the Peace and Security Legislation, and based on that, food and fuel have been provided to the U.S. Forces engaged in information gathering and other activities.

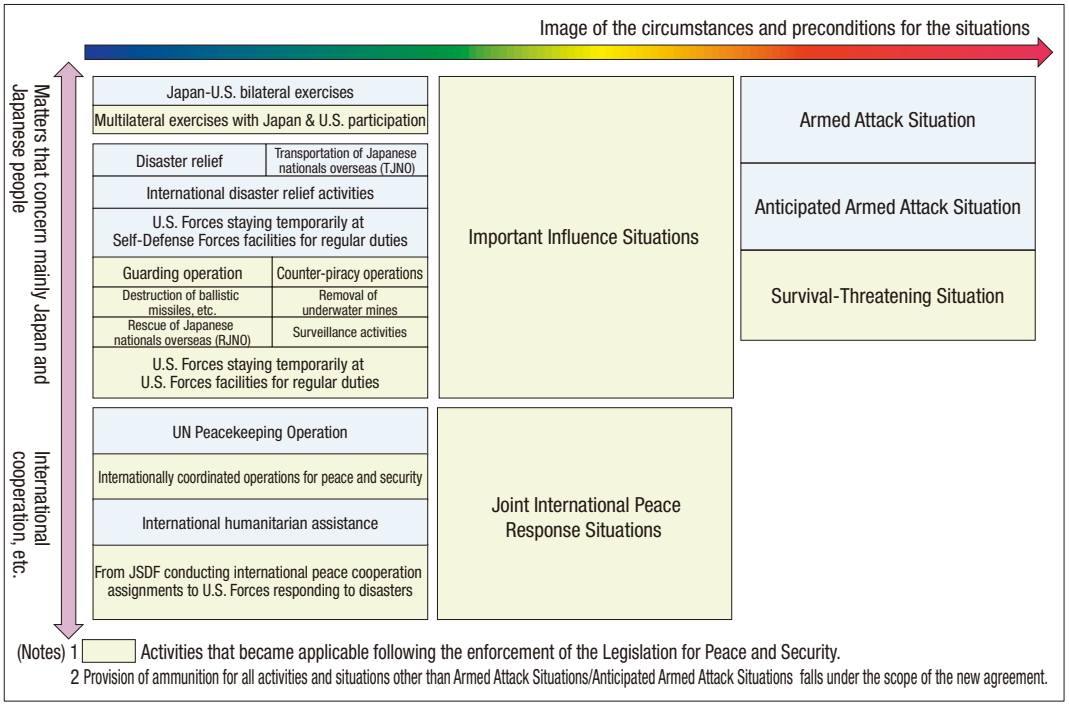
See Fig. III-2-2-1 (Japan-U.S. Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA))

Fig. III-2-2-1 Japan-U.S. Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)

Significance of reciprocal provision of supplies and services

In general, supplies and services necessary for unit operations are replenished by the units themselves. However, in such cases where allied nations are operating together, the reciprocal provision of supplies and services on site would enhance the flexibility of the operations.

Scope of the Japan-U.S. Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)



(Notes) 1 Activities that became applicable following the enforcement of the Legislation for Peace and Security.
2 Provision of ammunition for all activities and situations other than Armed Attack Situations/Anticipated Armed Attack Situations falls under the scope of the new agreement.

6 Bilateral Training and Exercises

Japan-U.S. bilateral training and exercises in peacetime not only contribute greatly to maintaining and enhancing bilateral response capabilities by improving interoperability, including mutual understanding of tactics and communication, but are also beneficial for improving tactical skills for each participant. In particular, the knowledge and techniques that the Japanese side learns from the U.S. Forces, which have vast experience in actual fighting, are invaluable and greatly contribute to improving JSDF capabilities.

In addition, conducting bilateral training at effective times, places, and scales demonstrates the unified commitment and capabilities of Japan and the United States, which has a deterrent effect. In light of these perspectives, the MOD/JSDF is continuing its initiatives to enrich the contents of bilateral training and exercises.

See Section 5 (Japan-U.S. Bilateral Training and Exercises), Reference 31 (Record of Main Japan-U.S. Bilateral Exercises in FY2025)

7 Extended Deterrence

Extended deterrence refers that a certain country provides its deterrence capabilities to an ally or other entity. Japan is the recipient of extended deterrence provided by the United States, including nuclear deterrence.

The Japanese and U.S. governments established the Japan-U.S. Extended Deterrence Dialogue (EDD) in 2010 as an enduring venue to discuss ways to sustain and strengthen extended deterrence. In December 2024, the governments formulated "Government of the United States of America-Government of Japan Guidelines for Extended Deterrence," which reinforce consultation and communication related to extended deterrence, strategic messaging to maximize deterrence, and measures for U.S. extended deterrence, bolstered by Japan's defense capabilities. In addition, the EDD was held at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana in June 2025, and in Washington, D.C. in February 2026.

Going forward, based on the Guidelines for Extended Deterrence, Japan and the United States will continue their efforts to enhance U.S. extended deterrence through various high-level consultations such as the EDD and Japan-U.S. ministerial meeting on extended deterrence.

8 Joint Use

The expansion of joint use of facilities and areas also means increasing bases for the JSDF's activities such as maneuver areas, ports, and airfields, which in turn enables closer operational coordination, enhanced interoperability, and improved flexibility and resiliency during bilateral activities. The JSDF has only a limited number of facilities in Okinawa, including Naha Air Base of the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF), and most of them are located in urban areas, which results in operational limitations. The joint use of facilities and areas of the U.S. Forces in Japan (USFJ) in Okinawa will greatly improve the JSDF's training environment in Okinawa, and facilitate implementation of bilateral training and exercises and enhanced interoperability between the JSDF and the U.S. Forces. It will also improve readiness and contribute to ensuring the safety of local people in case of a disaster.

Thus, while taking into account the JSDF defense posture in the regions, including the Southwestern Islands, and relations with local communities, Japan and the United States are proactively engaged in consultations, and specific initiatives are steadily progressing. In addition, the development of training areas in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands (Tinian Island) for joint use by the JSDF and the U.S. Forces is under consideration. Moreover, securing ammunition depots are an important issue for acquiring the various types of ammunition necessary to ensure and maintain sustained operational capability, and specific coordination has begun for additional joint/shared use of ammunition depots by the JSDF within the Kadena Ammunition Storage Area, a facility and area of the USFJ.

Section 3 Reinforcement of the Alliance's Coordination Functions

1 Establishment of the Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM)

In 2015, based on the "Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation" ("the Guidelines" hereafter), the Japanese and U.S. governments established the Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM) in order to seamlessly and effectively implement a well-aligned Japan-U.S. response to address any situation that affects Japan's peace and security or any other situation that may require an Alliance response.

Based on the framework shown in Fig. III-2-3-1, the ACM coordinates policy and operational aspects related to activities conducted by the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) and the U.S. Forces in all phases from peacetime to contingencies. This mechanism also contributes to timely information sharing as well as to the development and maintenance of common situational awareness.

The characteristics of the mechanism include that (1) it is the standing mechanism utilizable from peacetime; (2) it can be utilized for large-scale disasters in Japan as well as for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and globally; and (3) it enables whole-of-government coordination while ensuring the involvement of relevant Japanese and U.S. organizations. These characteristics enable the Japanese and U.S. governments to respond appropriately and promptly when the need for coordination arises.

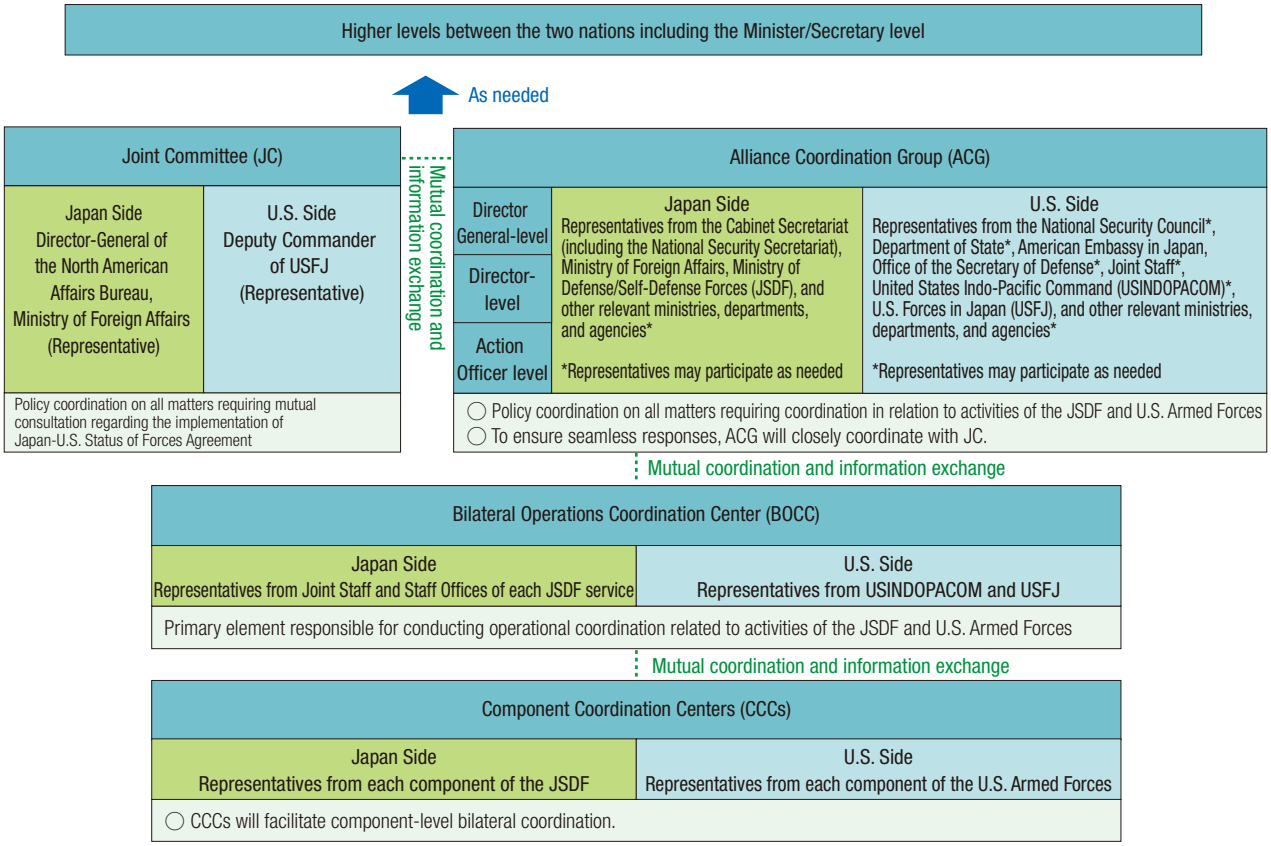
Since the establishment of the ACM, Japan and the United States have been utilizing the ACM to coordinate closely, including in response to the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake[1] and the 2024 Noto Peninsula Earthquake,[2] the ballistic missile launches by North Korea, and Chinese activities in the waters and airspace around the Senkaku Islands.

The National Defense Strategy of Japan (NDS) calls for Japan to further upgrade the overall coordination functions between Japan and the United States 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.

See Fig. III-2-3-1 (The Framework of Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM))

1 A series of seismic activities that occurred mainly in Kumamoto Prefecture in April 2016.
2 A series of seismic activities that occurred mainly in the Noto Peninsula in January 2024.

Fig. III-2-3-1 The Framework of Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM)



2 Strengthening Bilateral Command and Control (C2)

At the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (Japan-U.S. "2+2") held in July 2024, the United States expressed its intent to reconstitute the U.S. Forces in Japan as a joint force headquarters in order to facilitate deeper interoperability and cooperation on bilateral activities in peacetime and during contingencies. The Japanese and U.S. governments agreed to establish working groups and to advance discussions on matters such as the counterpart relationship between the JSDF Joint Operations Command (JJOC) and the U.S. Forces, while recognizing as one of the principles that the ACM remains the mechanism that facilitates bilateral policy and operational coordination related to activities conducted by the U.S. Forces and the JSDF in all phases from peacetime to contingencies. Based on this, in September of the same year, a bilateral C2 working group was established to enhance the Japan-U.S. command and control framework.

At the end of March 2025 this year, USFJ commenced its upgrade as a joint force headquarters (JFHQ) to enhance operational coordination capabilities with Japan. Specifically, to further strengthen operational cooperation between the JSDF and U.S. Forces, USFJ created a new element, namely the JJOC (JSDF Joint Operations Command) Cooperation Team (JCT), which is focused on coordination between the JSDF Joint Operations Command and the U.S. forces. This initial phase lays the groundwork for deepening interoperability and cooperation on joint bilateral activities in peacetime and contingencies as well as allowing closer communication through the new element. The upgrade of USFJ as a JFHQ will proceed in a step-by-step manner after consideration within the U.S. The details of coordination and process of cooperation will continue to be discussed through the bilateral C2 working group.

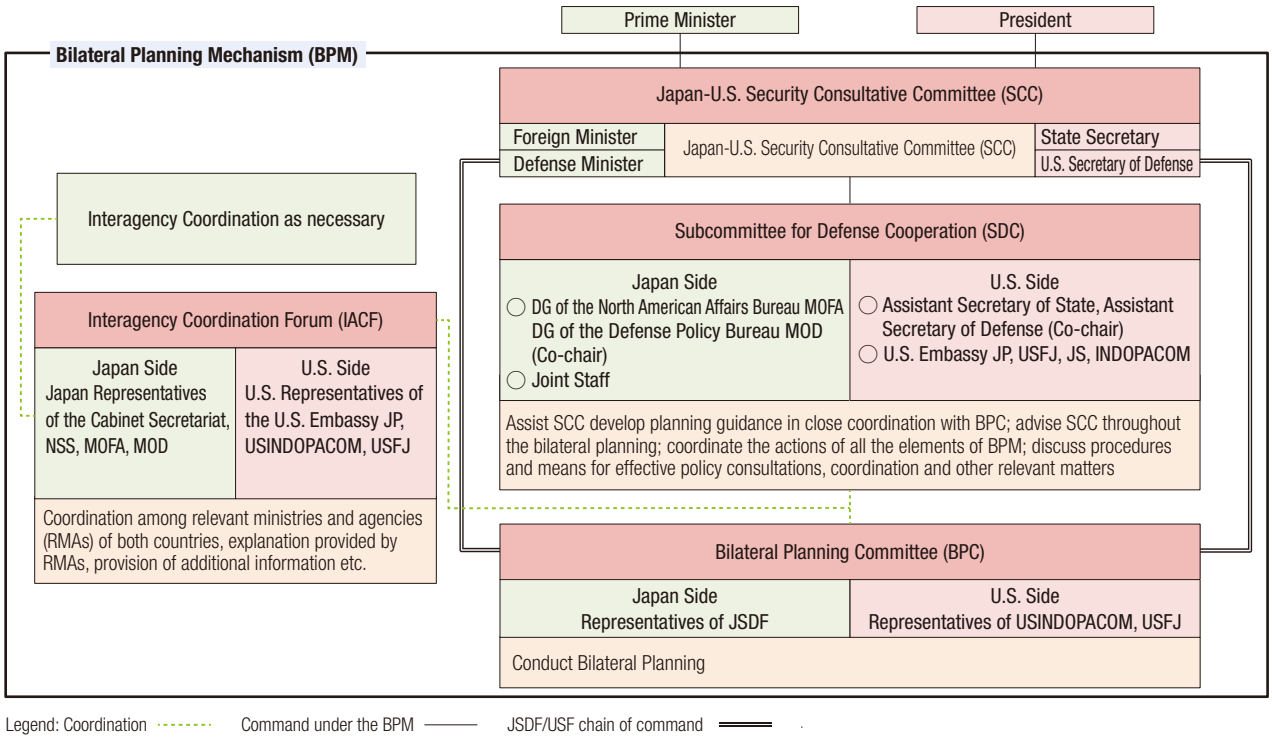
3 Closer Operational Coordination

Based on the Guidelines, the Japanese and U.S. governments recognize the importance of collocating operational coordination functions. The JSDF and the U.S. Forces exchange personnel to ensure robust information sharing, to facilitate smooth coordination, and to support international activities.

Based on the Guidelines, the Japanese and U.S. governments established the Bilateral Planning Mechanism (BPM) in 2015 for the purpose of implementing the development of bilateral plans in peacetime in line with the Guidelines to enable effective bilateral responses to contingencies relevant to peace and security of Japan. In the development of bilateral plans, the BPM functions to ensure Ministerial-level directions and supervision and the involvement of relevant government ministries and agencies, as well as conducting coordination for various forms of Japan-U.S. cooperation conducive to the development of bilateral plans. The Japanese and U.S. governments are supposed to conduct bilateral planning through the BPM.

See Fig. III-2-3-2 (The Framework of the Bilateral Planning Mechanism (BPM))

Fig. III-2-3-2 The Framework of the Bilateral Planning Mechanism (BPM)



Section 4 Efforts Concerning the Stationing of the USFJ

1 Stationing of the USFJ

1 Significance of the Stationing of the USFJ

Given the increasingly severe security environment surrounding Japan, it is necessary to maintain the presence of the USFJ and its readiness to take rapid and agile actions in case of emergency in Japan and the surrounding areas even in peacetime, so that the Japan-U.S. Alliance based on Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements functions effectively as a deterrent capability that contributes to the defense of Japan and the peace and stability of the region. Therefore, Japan accepts the stationing of the U.S. Forces based on the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, which constitutes a core element of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements.

Also, it is essential to realize the stable stationing of the USFJ in order to make a swift joint response to an armed attack against Japan based on Article 5 of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. In addition, the actions of U.S. Forces for the defense of Japan are conducted not only by the USFJ but also by timely reinforcements. The USFJ also serves as the foundation for such reinforcements.

While Article 5 of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty stipulates the obligation of the United States to defend Japan, Article 6 grants the United States the use of facilities and areas in Japan for the purpose of maintaining the security of Japan and international peace and security in the Far East. Therefore, although the obligations of Japan and the United States are not identical, the respective obligations of both countries are balanced when viewed as a whole.

2 Measures concerning the Stationing of the USFJ

The Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)[1] stipulates matters pertaining to USFJ facilities and areas and the status of the USFJ, including the furnishing of facilities and areas for use by the USFJ (USFJ facilities and areas), and satisfying the labor requirements of the USFJ. In addition, the Supplementary Agreement on the Environment[2] enhances cooperation for environmental stewardship relating to the USFJ, and the Supplementary Agreement on Civilian Component[3] clarifies the scope of the civilian component, etc.

(1) Furnishing of USFJ Facilities and Areas

Japan furnishes USFJ facilities and areas under the provision of the SOFA, in accordance with agreements reached through the Joint Committee between the governments of Japan and the United States.

The Government of Japan concludes lease contracts with owners of private and public lands on which USFJ facilities and areas exist in order to ensure the stable use of these facilities and areas. However, if there is no approval by the landowners, the Government obtains usage rights[4] under the Act on Special Measures concerning USFJ Land Release,[5] by compensating any loss by the landowners.

There are some facilities and areas temporarily furnished to the USFJ in accordance with the SOFA when the U.S. Forces use Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) facilities for a limited period, for example, during Japan-U.S. bilateral exercise.

(2) Satisfying Labor Requirements of the USFJ

The SOFA stipulates that the manpower (labor) required by the USFJ shall be satisfied with the assistance of the Government of Japan.

As of the end of FY2025, there were 25,494 USFJ local employees (hereinafter referred to as the "USFJ employees") at USFJ facilities and areas throughout Japan, working as clerks at headquarters, engineers at maintenance/supply facilities, members of security guards and fire departments on base, and sales staff at welfare/recreational facilities. They support the smooth operations of the USFJ.

The Government of Japan hires these USFJ employees

1 Agreement Under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States of America, Regarding Facilities and Areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan
2 Agreement Between Japan and the United States of America on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Stewardship Relating to the United States Armed Forces in Japan, Supplementary to Agreement Under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States of America, Regarding Facilities and Areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan
3 Agreement Between the Government of Japan and the Government of the United States of America on Cooperation with regard to Implementation Practices Relating to the Civilian Component of the United States Armed Forces in Japan, Supplementary to Agreement Under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States of America, Regarding Facilities and Areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan
4 The term "title" means a legal cause that justifies a certain act.
5 Act on Special Measures for USFJ Land Release, Incidental to the Agreement Under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States of America, Regarding Facilities and Areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan

in accordance with the provisions of the SOFA. The Ministry of Defense (MOD) supports the stationing of the USFJ by performing administrative work for personnel management, payment of wages, health care, and welfare, etc.

(3) Supplementary Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Stewardship

In 2015, the governments of Japan and the United States signed the Supplementary Agreement on the Environment, which came into force on the same day. This supplementary agreement represents an international commitment with legal binding force and sets forth provisions concerning the issuance and maintenance of the Japan Environmental Governing Standards (JEGS) and the establishment and maintenance, etc., of procedures for access to USFJ facilities and areas in the event of actual occurrence of an accident (leakage) that affects the environment and in the event of a field survey (including cultural property survey) related to the return of a facility or area.

See Part III, Chapter 4, Section 2-2 (Initiatives Related to USFJ Facilities/Areas)

(4) Supplementary Agreement on Civilian Component

In 2017, the governments of Japan and the United States signed the Supplementary Agreement on Civilian Component, which came into force on the same day. This Supplementary Agreement clarifies the scope of the civilian component, which is addressed only by a general provision in SOFA, in addition to developing criteria used in evaluating contractor employee positions for eligibility to receive designation as members of the civilian component, and stipulates the procedures for notification and review, etc., together with the exclusion of ordinary residents from the civilian component.

3 USFJ-Related Costs

USFJ-related costs include Host Nation Support, or HNS (cost sharing for the stationing of USFJ),[6] costs for implementing the stipulations of the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) Final Report to mitigate the impact on the people of Okinawa, as well as costs for implementing measures that contribute to mitigating the impact on the local communities associated with the initiatives for the realignment of the U.S. Forces.

4 HNS (Cost Sharing for the Stationing of USFJ)

HNS (Cost Sharing for the Stationing of USFJ) plays an important role to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements. Due to soaring prices and wages in Japan since the mid-1970s, and changes in the international economic situation, Japan began to bear labor costs such as welfare costs for USFJ local employees in FY1978. Then in FY1979, it started to bear costs for the Facilities Improvement Program, or FIP.

In addition, as labor costs soared due to changes in economic conditions surrounding both countries, there arose a concern that the employment stability of the employees would be undermined, and then the activities of the USFJ could be affected. Therefore, in 1987, Japan and the United States concluded an agreement that sets forth special measures relating to Article 24 of the SOFA (the Special Measures Agreement, or SMA)[7] as exceptional, limited, and provisional measures relating to the cost sharing principle of the SOFA.

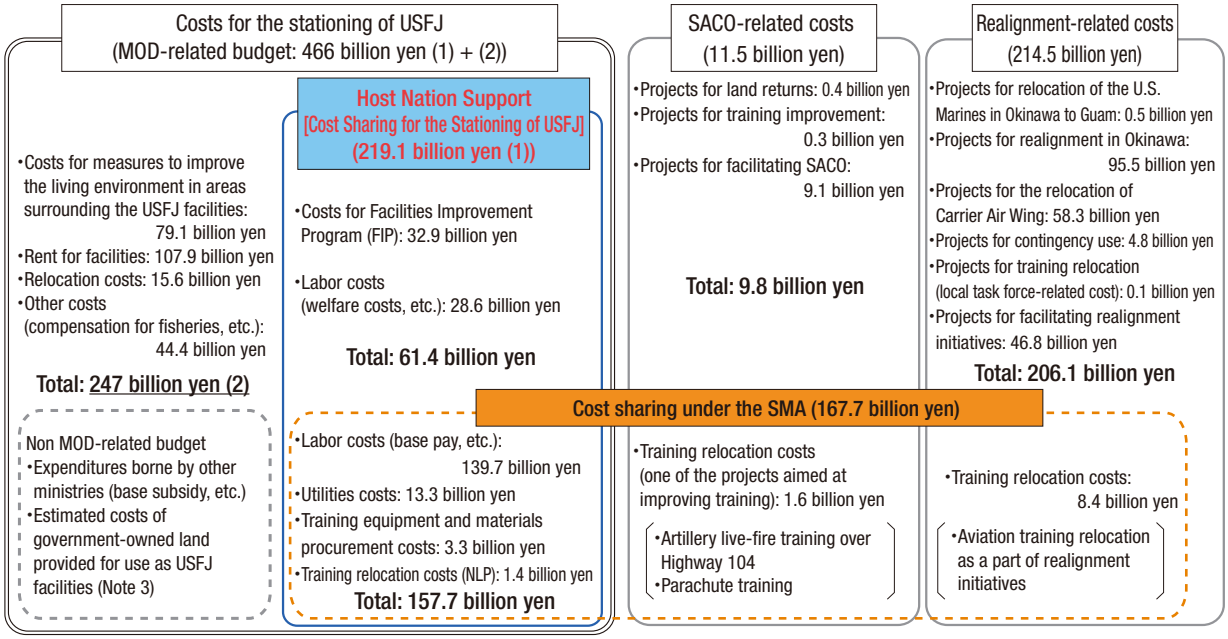
Based on this SMA, Japan started to bear labor costs of eight categories such as the adjustment allowance (currently replaced by the regional allowance). As the SMA was revised later on, the costs shared by Japan have covered labor costs including base pay and utilities costs from FY1991, training relocation costs from FY1996, and training material and equipment procurement costs from FY2022.

See Fig. III-2-4-1 (USFJ-Related Costs (Budget for FY2026)); Fig. III-2-4-2 (Japan's Cost Sharing Under the SMA for HNS (Cost Sharing for the Stationing of USFJ), etc.)

6 Based on the consensus that these costs will build the foundation to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance as a result of the negotiations over this SMA (New Special Measures relating to Article 24 of the SOFA), the Japanese side has decided to refer to this budget by a Japanese phrase that points to its goal of enhancing Alliance readiness and resiliency.

7 Agreement between Japan and the United States of America concerning Special Measures relating to Article XXIV of the Agreement under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America, Regarding Facilities and Areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan

Fig. III-2-4-1 USFJ-Related Costs (Budget for FY2026)



(Notes) 1 Training relocation costs under the SMA extend into HNS (Cost sharing for the stationing of USFJ) as well as SACO-related costs and the realignment-related costs.
2 The SACO-related costs refer to the costs for implementing the contents of the SACO Final Report to reduce the impact on the people of Okinawa, while the realignment-related costs refer to the costs relating to the measures that contribute to reducing the impact on local communities as a part of the realignment initiatives. On the other hand, since HNS (cost sharing for the stationing of USFJ) is Japan's voluntary effort to bear some costs in light of the importance of ensuring the smooth and effective implementation of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements, its nature is different from the SACO-related costs and the realignment-related costs, and is categorized separately.
3 The costs for the stationing of USFJ include the MOD-related budget, other ministry-related budgets (base subsidy, etc.: 41.1 billion yen, FY2025 budget) and the estimated costs of government-owned land provided for use as USFJ facilities (164.6 billion yen, FY2025 estimate).
4 Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

Fig. III-2-4-2 Japan's Cost Sharing Under the SMA for HNS (Cost Sharing for the Stationing of USFJ), etc.

SMA	Effective Period	Five years (FY2022 to FY2026)
	Labor Costs	23,178 people out of all the workers.
	Utilities Costs	23.4 billion yen for FY2022 and FY2023, 15.1 billion yen for FY2024, and 13.3 billion yen for FY2025 and FY2026.
	Training Equipment and Materials Procurement Costs	Up to 20 billion yen over the five years will be borne for costs related to the procurement of training equipment and materials that will contribute not only to the readiness of the USFJ, but also to the enhancement of interoperability between the JSDF and USFJ.
	Training Relocation Costs	While maintaining the current framework and standards, Alaska will become a permissible training relocation site for the Aviation Training Relocation program. The annual training relocation costs funded by Japan will be approximately equal to the budget amount FY2021, which is approximately 11.4 billion yen.
FIP		Up to 164.1 billion yen over the five years, with focus on projects that contribute to the readiness and resiliency of the USFJ.

2 Efforts for the Realignment of the USFJ

1 USFJ Realignment Plan

The realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan was set forth in the Japan-U.S. Roadmap for Realignment Implementation in May 2006.

Subsequently, a realignment plan was coordinated during the April 2012 Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee ("2+2" Meeting) based on the following factors: (1) the necessity of implementing measures to realize visible mitigation of the impact on Okinawa promptly and steadily; (2) the necessity of balancing the realignment plan and the strategic rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, which was set out in the U.S. Defense Strategic Guidance released in 2012; and (3) the reduction in the cost associated with the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps to Guam demanded by the U.S. Congress. The 2006 Roadmap stated that the command elements of the III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) stationed in Okinawa would be relocated to Guam. However, through the realignment plan, it was decided to alter the composition of the units and to deploy the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF), consisting of command, ground, aviation and logistics support elements, in Japan, Guam, and Hawaii, as well as in Australia as a rotational unit. In addition, the governments of Japan and the United States decided to delink both the relocation of U.S. Marine Corps personnel from Okinawa to Guam and the resulting land returns south of Kadena Air Base from the progress on the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF).

Furthermore, during the "2+2" Meeting in January 2023, in order to further strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance in response to the increasingly severe security environment, Japan and the United States decided to optimize the posture of the U.S. Forces by further enhancing the force posture of the USFJ to have more versatile, resilient, and mobile capabilities, and by readjusting the realignment plan that was adjusted in 2012. Specifically, it was agreed that the 3rd Marine Division Headquarters and the 12th Marine Regiment will remain in Okinawa, and that the 12th Marine Regiment will be reorganized into the Marine Littoral Regiment (MLR). In readjusting the Realignment Plan, the basic tenets of the current Realignment Plan are being maintained, and maximum consideration is being given to mitigating the impact on Okinawa. Specifically, Japan and the United States have confirmed that (1) the number of U.S. Marine Corps personnel in Okinawa after the realignment will continue to be approximately 10,000; (2) the realignment will not affect the lands scheduled to be returned in the Okinawa Consolidation Plan, nor will it affect the progress of the FRF at Camp Schwab; and (3) there will be no change in the commencement of the relocation of U.S. Marines Corps personnel from Okinawa to Guam, which will begin in 2024.

Combined with the enhanced capabilities and posture of the JSDF, this initiative will greatly enhance the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. Japan will continue to hold close consultations to further optimize the posture of the USFJ.

See Reference 32 (United States-Japan Roadmap for Realignment Implementation (tentative translation))

2 Progress of the Realignment of the USFJ

Various efforts have been made for the realignment of the USFJ, including the relocation of carrier-based aircraft from Naval Air Facility Atsugi (Kanagawa Prefecture) to MCAS Iwakuni (Yamaguchi Prefecture), and the relocation of KC-130 air refueling aircraft from MCAS Futenma (Okinawa Prefecture) to MCAS Iwakuni, as well as their rotational deployment to Kanoya Air Base of the Maritime Self-Defense Force (Kagoshima Prefecture).

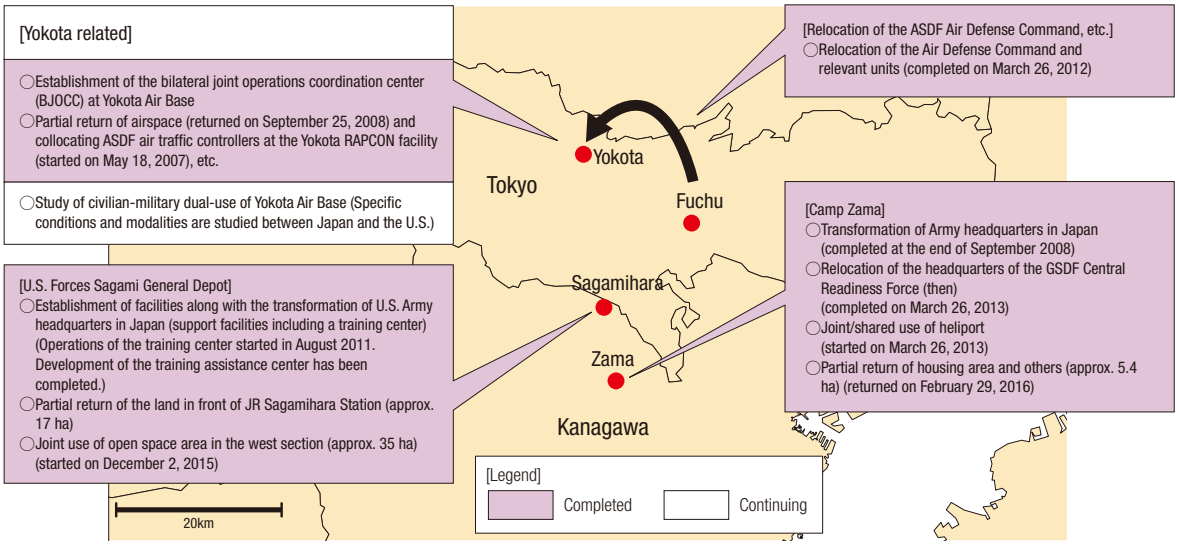
The MOD is continuing efforts to develop the JSDF facilities on Mageshima (Nishinoomote City, Kagoshima Prefecture) that will be used for field-carrier landing practice (FCLP), return of land south of Kadena Air Base including MCAS Futenma, and relocation of U.S. Marine Corps personnel stationed in Okinawa to Guam.

See Fig. III-2-4-3 (Progress of Force Structure Realignment of the USFJ and JSDF Described in "the United States-Japan Roadmap for Realignment Implementation" (1)); Fig. III-2-4-4 (Progress of Force Structure Realignment of the USFJ and JSDF Described in "the United States-Japan Roadmap for Realignment Implementation" (2))

REFERENCE: Policies regarding U.S. Forces in Japan
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/zaibeigun/index.html

Fig. III-2-4-3 Progress of Force Structure Realignment of the USFJ and JSDF Described in "the United States-Japan Roadmap for Realignment Implementation" (1)

1 Realignment in the Kanto Area



2 Realignment in Okinawa

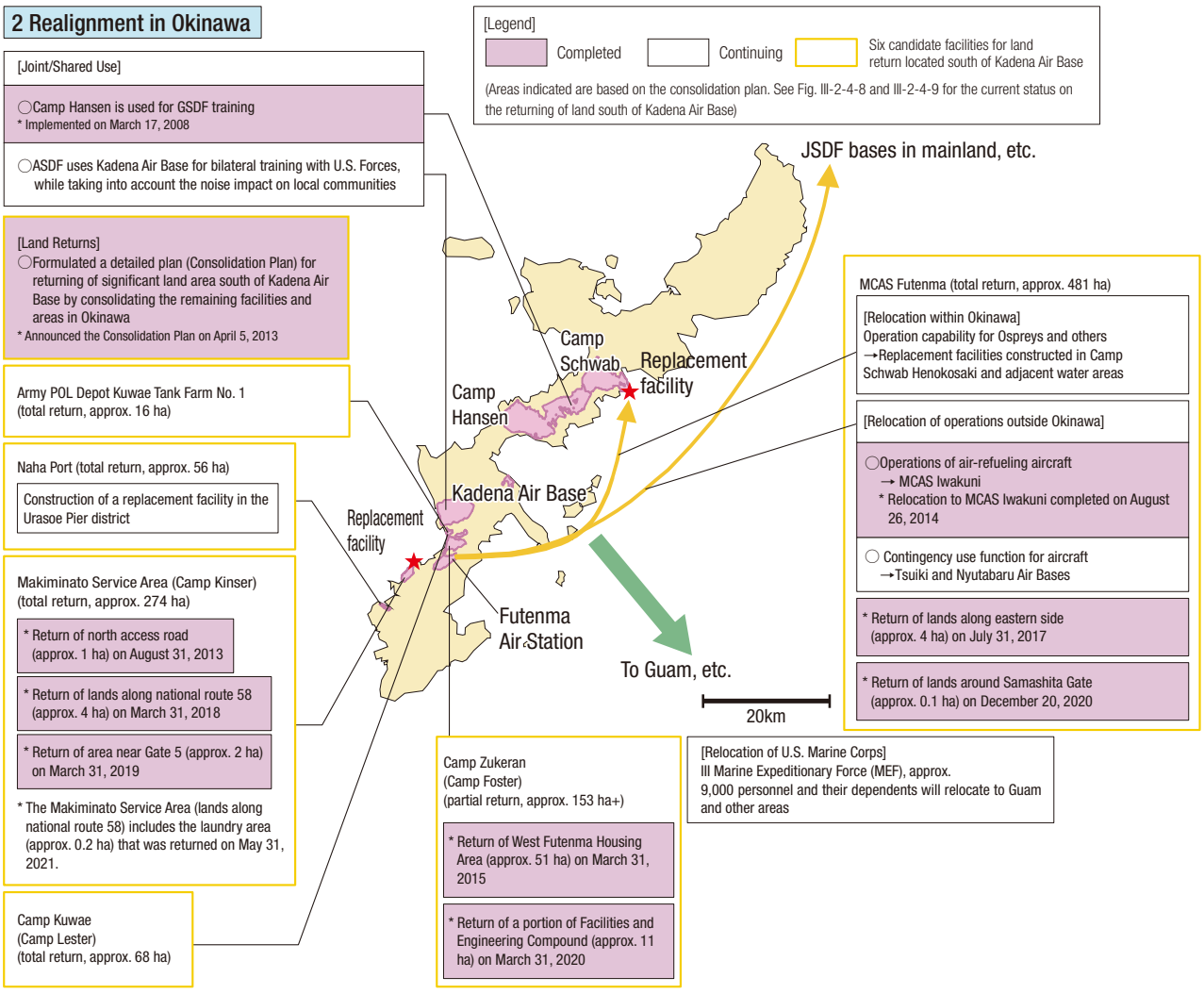
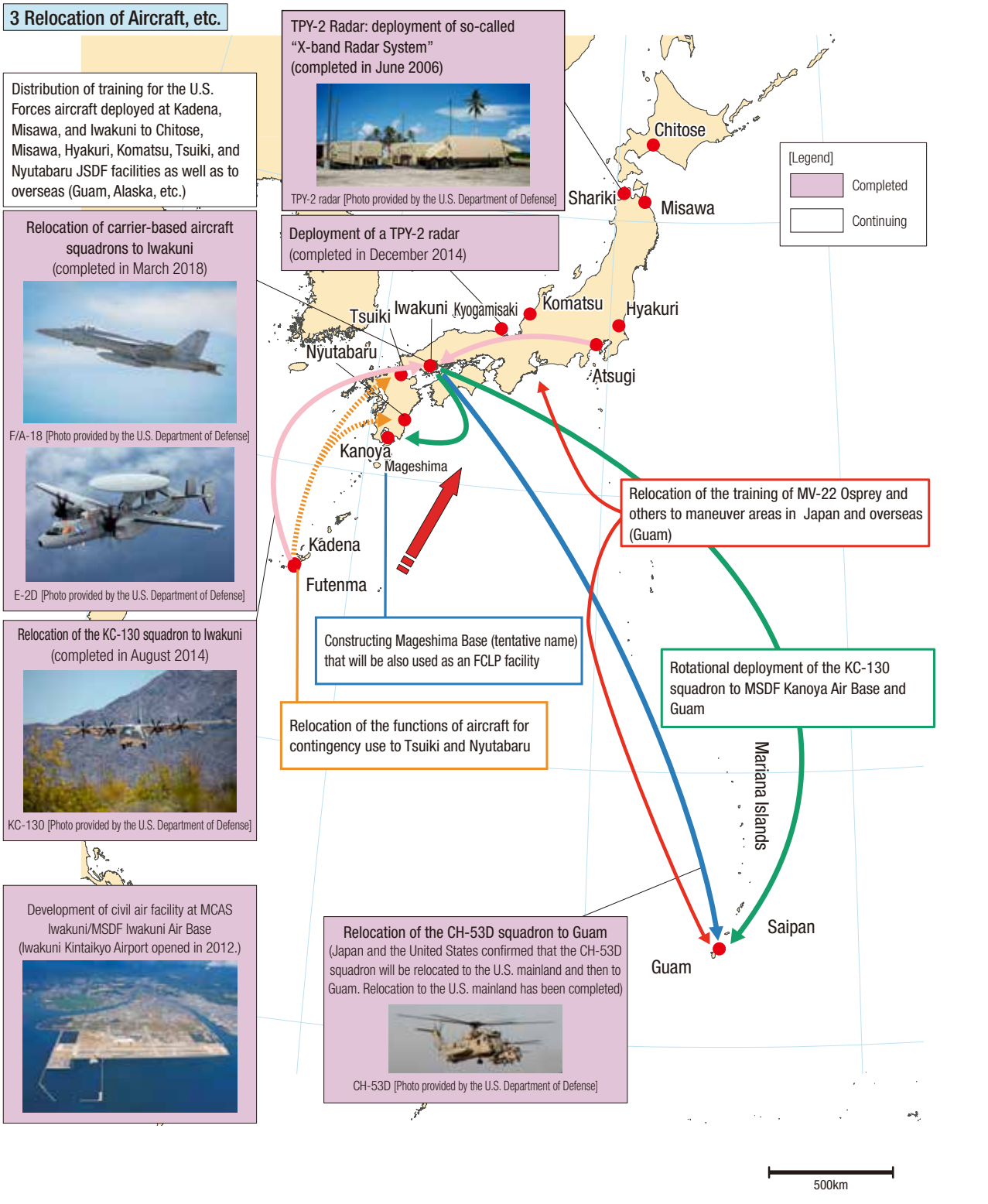


Fig. III-2-4-4 Progress of Force Structure Realignment of the USFJ and JSDF Described in "the United States-Japan Roadmap for Realignment Implementation" (2)



REFERENCE: Facility development on Mageshima
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/chouwa/mage/index.html

3 Field-Carrier Landing Practice (FCLP)

The Roadmap prescribes that a bilateral framework to conduct a study on a permanent FCLP facility is to be established with the goal of selecting a permanent site at the earliest possible date. The MOD has acquired most of the land on Mageshima, and has been providing the explanation regarding the development of the facility to the local communities in Kagoshima Prefecture, Nishinoomote City, Nakatane Town, and Minamitane Town.

In the Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee ("2+2") issued in 2022, the United States welcomed the Government of Japan's decision to develop JSDF facilities on Mageshima.

In January 2023, after considering the views of the Mayor of Nishinoomote City, the Mayors of Nakatane Town and Minamitane Town, and other relevant stakeholders, the MOD issued the public notice of the Environmental Impact Statement, and started the construction work in Mageshima.

In March of the same year, construction work also began on the maritime area around Mageshima, and the development of facilities are steadily progressing in close cooperation with local municipalities.

4 Relocation and Return of MCAS Futenma

Although more than 30 years have passed since Japan and the United States agreed on the total return of MCAS Futenma, it has not been achieved yet. Any further postponement is no longer acceptable.

The fundamental idea shared by the Government of Japan and the people of Okinawa is that it is imperative not to allow MCAS Futenma to remain indefinitely at its current location, which is in the vicinity of houses and schools, in the center of Ginowan City, Okinawa Prefecture.

The Government of Japan's view is that the current plan to relocate MCAS Futenma to Henoko, Nago City is the only solution to avoid continued use of the Air Station. This has been confirmed by the Japanese and U.S. governments on repeated occasions, joint statements at Japan-U.S. summit meetings and the Japan-U.S. "2+2" Meetings.

The Government of Japan will continue to make every effort to achieve the total return of MCAS Futenma as early as possible, while building on the dialogues of long standing with locals and being scrupulous in providing explanations to them.

The return of MCAS Futenma is expected to eliminate danger in the area and to contribute to the further growth of Okinawa, including Ginowan City, through the reuse of the area (approximately 476 hectares, a land area around 100 times larger than Tokyo Dome).

(1) Relocation of MCAS Futenma and Mitigation of the Impact on Okinawa

The relocation of MCAS Futenma holds more significance than merely moving the facility from one location to another. Rather, it involves reduction in the base's functions and area in Okinawa, and contributes greatly to mitigating the impact on Okinawa.

a. Distribution of Functions Offered by MCAS Futenma

The relocation of MCAS Futenma involves the return of the entire area by relocating three functions: (1) operation of MV-22 (Osprey) and other aircraft, (2) operation of air refueling aircraft, and (3) accepting transient aircraft in contingencies. Of these three functions, (2) and (3) involve relocation out of Okinawa Prefecture, while (1) involves relocation to Camp Schwab.

The relocation of (2) operation of air refueling aircraft to MCAS Iwakuni was completed in 2014. With regard to (3) accepting transient aircraft in contingencies, Japan and the United States agreed in 2018 to develop facilities that would be necessary for relocating the function to ASDF Tsuiki Air Base (Fukuoka Prefecture) and ASDF Nyutabaru Air Base (Miyazaki Prefecture). By March 2023, construction was completed except for the runway extension at Tsuiki Air Base. Offshore construction to extend the runway at Tsuiki Air Base commenced in September 2024.

b. Reduction in Area

The area required for land reclamation to build the FRF is approximately 152 hectares, less than one-third of the approximately 476 hectares of MCAS Futenma, and the FRF will be equipped with a 1,200 meter runway (1,800 meters including overruns) much shorter than the current runway length of 2,740 meters at MCAS Futenma.

c. Reduction in Noise and Risks

Two runways will be constructed in a V-shape, which enables flight paths for takeoff and landing to be located over the sea, in line with the requests of the local community. In MCAS Futenma, flight paths used daily for training and other purposes are located over residential areas, whereas flight paths in the FRF will be changed to over the sea, thereby reducing noise and risks.

For example, while more than 10,000 households are located in areas requiring housing noise insulation near MCAS Futenma, there will be no household requiring such insulation around the FRF.

(2) Background Concerning the Futenma Replacement Facility

a. Consideration of Relocation Site

Considering the occurrence of the U.S. Forces helicopter crash in Ginowan City in August 2004, bilateral discussions on the realignment have been made toward realizing the relocation and return of MCAS Futenma at the earliest possible date in order to resolve the concern of the residents living in the vicinity.

The Japan-U.S. "2+2" joint statement compiled in October 2005 called for locating the FRF in an L-shaped configuration. However, after that, based on consultations and agreement with the local governments including Nago City, it was in the Roadmap that the runways of the FRF be positioned in a V-shaped configuration. With regard to construction of this replacement facility, a Memorandum of Basic Understanding was exchanged between then Governor of Okinawa Inamine and then Minister of State for Defense Nukaga in the same month.

After the change of government in September 2009, the Exploratory Committee for Okinawa Base Issues was established. After reviews conducted by the Committee, at the Japan-U.S. "2+2" Meeting held in May 2010, the governments of Japan and the United States confirmed the intention to locate the FRF in the Camp Schwab Henokosaki area and the adjacent waters. Subsequently, at the Japan-U.S. "2+2" Meeting held in June 2011, it was decided that the runway would take a V shape.

During the deliberation process which led to these conclusions, first of all, it was determined that, from a security perspective, the deterrence of the U.S. Forces, including that of the U.S. Marine Corps stationed in Okinawa that is located in a crucial area for the security of Japan, cannot be lessened while there remains instability and uncertainty in the security environment in East Asia.

Furthermore, there was concern that the functions of the U.S. Marine Corps, such as mobility and readiness, would be weakened if the helicopter units stationed at MCAS Futenma were to be detached from the other Marines units stationed in Okinawa and moved abroad or out of the prefecture. This is because the U.S. Marine Corps conducts integrated operations of air, ground, logistics support, and command elements.

Therefore, it was concluded that the FRF had to be located within Okinawa Prefecture.

b. Beginning of Landfill Work

An environmental impact assessment was conducted for approximately five years from 2007 for the FRF Project. For this assessment, the MOD received 1,561 opinions from the Governor of Okinawa, made all the required revisions, and appropriately reflected them in the content of the environmental impact assessment report.

The Director General of the Okinawa Defense Bureau submitted the landfill permit request on public waters to Okinawa Prefecture in March 2013, and then Governor of Okinawa Nakaima approved this in December 2013.

After the construction began, then Governor of Okinawa Onaga revoked the landfill permit, which led to litigation between the Government of Japan and Okinawa Prefecture. However, landfill work began in the waters of the Henoko side in December 2018. As of May 2026, the progress of landfill work in the waters of the Henoko side had reached approximately 99.5%, indicating that the work is largely complete.

c. Consideration on Soil Improvement Work, Etc.

Regarding the soil foundation of the landfill area, a study was conducted on the stability of seawalls and other structures in the waters of Oura-wan area in light of the results of a boring survey, etc. As a result, through soil improvement work via prevailing and adequately proven construction methods[8] used for construction projects such as Haneda Airport, Kansai International Airport, and Naha Airport, it was confirmed that the soil foundation would be sufficiently strong to meet the required stability, thereby ensuring that it is possible to complete landfill and construct an air base there properly. This was also confirmed by the Technical Review Committee that has been held since September 2019 consisting of experts in the fields of geotechnical, structural, hydraulic, and pavement engineering.

In addition, in December 2019, the Okinawa Defense Bureau announced that, based on the results of studies conducted to date, it would take nine years and three months from commencement to completion of construction according to the revised plan and about 12 years in total until the completion of the administrative procedures described in the Okinawa Consolidation Plan. Moreover, the cost of the Futenma Air Station Replacement Facility Construction Project was estimated at about 930 billion yen.

Similarly, in terms of the environment, the Environmental Monitoring Committee, comprising experts in various fields related to the natural environment and others, which was held from January to April 2020, confirmed that the degree of impact on the environment caused by the change in the plan would be the same or less than that before the change.

d. Landfill Permit Revision Request on Public Waters

As explained above, hearing experts' insights on the environment and other aspects, after due consideration, in April 2020, the Okinawa Defense Bureau submitted to the Governor of Okinawa Prefecture the Landfill Permit Revision Request given the additional implementation of the soil improvement work, etc. However, in November 2021, the Governor of Okinawa Prefecture revoked approval of the request on the grounds that surveys of the soil foundation and environmental protection measures at the planned landfill area were inadequate. In response, in December 2021, the Director General of the Okinawa Defense Bureau filed a request for review with the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism under the Administrative Complaint Review Act. In April 2022, the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism determined revocation of the disapproval by the Governor of Okinawa, and also issued an instruction for

8 The standard methods are the sand compaction pile method, the sand drain method, and the paper drain method. Among examples of projects in which these methods were used is the construction work to expand Haneda Airport.

correction against Okinawa Prefecture based on the Local Autonomy Act to approve the Permit Revision Request.

In response to this determination and the directive for correction, in August the same year, the governor of Okinawa Prefecture filed lawsuits with the Fukuoka High Court, Naha Branch to revoke the government's involvement. As for these lawsuits, in August 2023, the Supreme Court decided against the Okinawa Governor's petition to accept the appeal regarding the determination, and in September the same year, the Supreme Court issued a judgment to dismiss the Okinawa Governor's appeal regarding the directive for correction, and accordingly the judicial judgment that the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism's directive to approve the Permit Revision Request was legitimate was finalized.

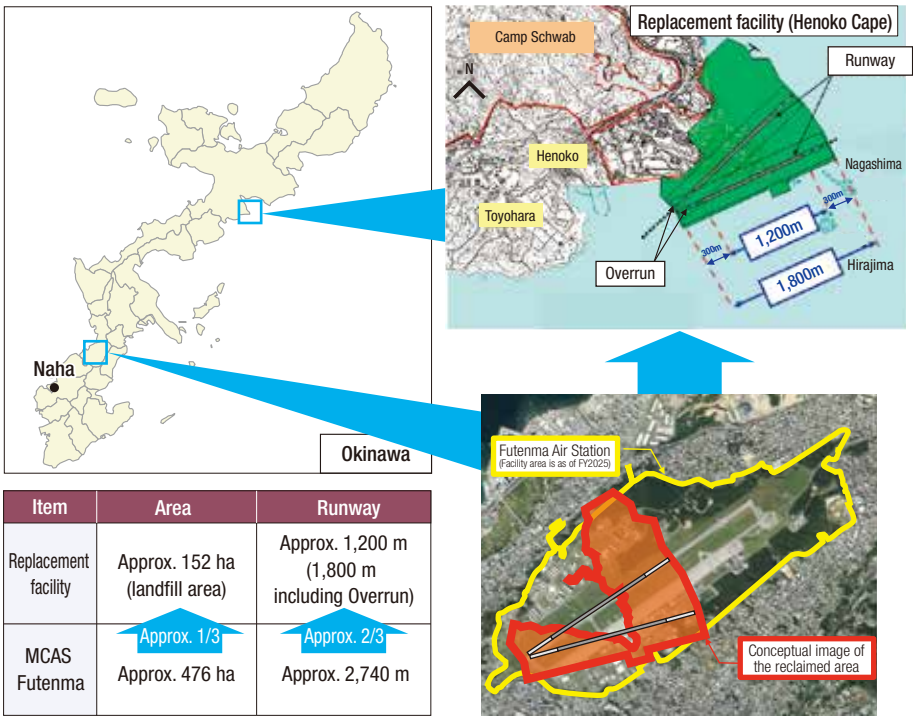
Based on this judgment, in the same month, the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism issued a recommendation and instruction under the Local Autonomy Act to the Governor of Okinawa Prefecture to approve the Permit Revision Request, but the approval remained pending.

Therefore, in October the same year, the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism filed a subrogation lawsuit with the Fukuoka High Court, Naha Branch for substituted execution under the Local Autonomy Law. Subsequently, in December the same year, a judgment was made ordering the Governor of Okinawa Prefecture to approve the Landfill Permit Revision Request by a deadline, but since no disposition of approval had been made by that deadline, the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism issued approval under the law. In the same month, the Governor of Okinawa Prefecture filed a petition for acceptance of an appeal to the Supreme Court regarding this lawsuit, but, in February 2024, the Supreme Court decided to reject the petition, whereupon the judgment of the Fukuoka High Court, Naha Branch ordering the Governor of Okinawa Prefecture to approve the Landfill Permit Revision Request became final.

In addition, in September 2022, due to dissatisfaction with the determination of the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Okinawa Prefecture filed a lawsuit with the Naha District Court to revoke the determination based on the Administrative Case Litigation Act. In January 2025, however, the Supreme Court refused the Okinawa Prefecture's petition to file a final appeal in this lawsuit, thereby finalizing the judicial judgment that the prefecture's appeal was illegitimate. Accordingly, all pending lawsuits between the Government of Japan and Okinawa Prefecture have been concluded.

See Fig. III-2-4-5 (Comparison between the Replacement Facility and MCAS Futenma (image)); Reference 33 (Background of the Futenma Replacement Facility); Reference 34 (Estimated Timelines for the Return of Facilities and Areas South of Kadena)

Fig. III-2-4-5 Comparison between the Replacement Facility and MCAS Futenma (image)



Item	Area	Runway
Replacement facility	Approx. 152 ha (landfill area)	Approx. 1,200 m (1,800 m including Overrun)
	Approx. 1/3	Approx. 2/3
MCAS Futenma	Approx. 476 ha	Approx. 2,740 m

(Note) Based on photos provided by Ginowan City

(3) Construction Based on the Plan after Approval of the Landfill Permit Revision Request

a. Status of Construction

Since the approval of the Landfill Permit Revision Request in December 2023, the Okinawa Defense Bureau has been sequentially advancing seawall and landfill construction on the Oura Bay side. Soil improvement work commenced in December 2024, and new landfill work commenced on the Oura Bay side in November 2025, construction work is therefore steadily progressing toward the total return of MCAS Futenma.

See Fig. III-2-4-6 (Progress Status of Construction Work Related to the Futenma Air Station Replacement Facility Project)

Fig. III-2-4-6 Progress Status of Construction Work Related to the Futenma Air Station Replacement Facility Project

Henoko side

- Landfill work at Henoko side started in December 2018.
- Approx. 3.18 mil CBM of landfill was complete for an entire volume of approx. 3.19 mil CBM (99.5% complete) as of the end of September 2023
- Temporarily stockpiling landfill material which would be used for landfill work at Oura Bay side started in January 2024.

Oura Bay side

- In January 2024, construction at Oura Bay side (construction of offshore yard) started.
- In February, construction of seawalls in landfill area (3)-1 started.
- In May, coral transplantation started.
- In August, construction of Seawalls A, N-1 and N-2 started.
- In November, landfill work in landfill area (3)-1 started .
- In December, complete coral transplantation and soil improvement work started.
- In April 2025, construction of Seawall N-8 started.
- In September, construction of Seawall N-9 started.
- In November, landfill work in landfill area (3)-3 started.
- In March 2026, construction of Seawall N-6 started.



b. Environmental Conservation Initiatives

The environmental impact assessment report stated that because coral inhabiting the landfill area would be lost due to the landfill work, coral would be transplanted to the extent possible as a preservation measure. The transplantation of the coral to be preserved was completed in December 2024 with the permission of the Governor of Okinawa Prefecture. The FRF Project expands a scope for preservation to be more careful in transplanting coral compared to landfill work to construct the second runway at Naha Airport.[9] Land hermit crabs designated as a national natural treasure, as well as shellfish and crustaceans listed as endangered species, have also been appropriately moved to a surrounding location suitable for habitat in time for the construction. Furthermore, as part of measures for habitats that will be lost due to the landfill work, measures have been taken to transplant coral grown in land-based facilities to the waters surrounding Oura Bay and expand the growth area of seagrass beds.

In addition, various environmental protection measures have been implemented in anticipation of dugongs entering Oura Bay. Specifically, habitat status surveys using aircraft, feeding trails surveys, and vocalization monitoring using underwater recording devices are conducted to understand the habitat status of dugongs. Additionally, surveillance vessels are deployed during daily construction operations to monitor and watch for any dugongs approaching the work area.

9 Specifically, in relation to the construction of the second runway at Naha Airport, around 37,000 clusters of small corals were transplanted. If the same standard as the one applicable to the construction of the alternative facility had been applied, the number of clusters of small corals transplanted would have been around 170,000.

c. Consideration for Surrounding Residents

To share the Government of Japan's and Nago City's understanding of the impact of the FRF Construction Project on residents' living environment and economic activities and to implement coordinated measures, the Council on the Impact of Futenma Air Station Replacement Facility Construction was newly established in May 2024, with its third meeting held in February 2026. The Council discussed the impact of the replacement facility construction, measures addressing Camp Schwab-related issues, urban development plans for Nago City including the three Kube districts and other relevant topics.

The "Council on Issues Concerning the Preservation of the Living Condition of Ginowan City Residents in Connection with the MCAS Futenma Operations " was established, and its first council meeting was held. The Council serves as a forum for the Government of Japan and Ginowan City to share a common understanding of issues regarding the conservation of Ginowan City residents' living conditions and related matters arising from the operations of MCAS Futenma.

With the goal of achieving the earliest possible total return of the MCAS Futenma while continuing to provide detailed explanations to local residents, the construction work will proceed steadily toward relocation to Henoko, with due consideration for the natural environment and the living environment of local residents.

5 Return of Land Areas South of Kadena Air Base

The Roadmap stated that, following the relocation to the FRF, the return of MCAS Futenma, and the transfer of III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) personnel to Guam, the remaining facilities and areas on Okinawa will be consolidated, thereby enabling the return of significant land areas south of Kadena Air Base.

Subsequently, at the Japan-U.S. "2+2" Meeting in 2012, it was decided to delink the progress on the relocation to the FRF from both the relocation of the III MEF personnel from Okinawa to Guam and the resulting land returns south of Kadena Air Base. In addition, with regard to the land to be returned, it was agreed to conduct consultations focusing on three categories, namely (1) land eligible for immediate return; (2) land eligible for return once the relocation of functions is completed; and (3) land eligible for return after the relocation abroad.

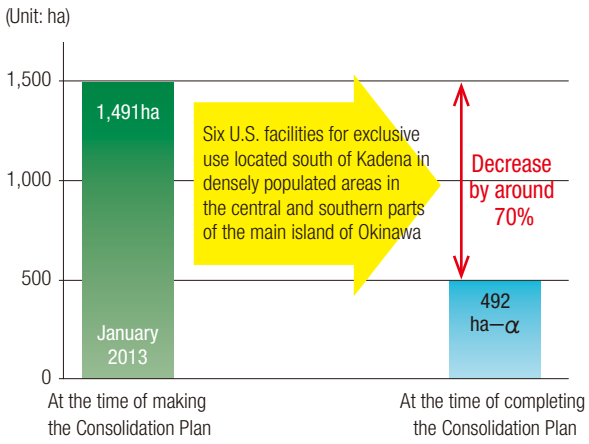
(1) Consolidation Plan for Facilities and Areas in Okinawa

Since the change of administration at the end of 2012, Japan and the United States have continued consultation under the basic policy to dedicate all strength toward mitigating the impact on Okinawa. Japan strongly requested an early return of land areas south of Kadena Air Base—including Makiminato Service Area (Camp Kinser) in Urasoe City, where Okinawa's requests for return are particularly strong—and coordinated with the United States. As a result, in 2013, the "Consolidation Plan for Facilities and Areas in Okinawa (Okinawa Consolidation Plan)" was announced.

The return of all land according to the plan will enable the return of approximately 70% (approximately 1,048 hectares, the equivalent of 220 Tokyo Domes) of six USFJ facilities for exclusive use[10] located in densely populated areas in the central and southern parts of the main island of Okinawa. In the Okinawa Consolidation Plan, it is confirmed between Japan and the United States that this plan will be implemented as soon as possible, and that the Government will continue to make the utmost efforts to return the land south of Kadena Air Base, at an early date.

See Fig. III-2-4-7 (Consolidation Plan for Facilities and Areas in Okinawa)

Fig. III-2-4-7 Consolidation Plan for Facilities and Areas in Okinawa



(2) Progress in the Return of Land

Since the announcement of the Okinawa Consolidation Plan, efforts have been made to return the land. By March 2020, the return of all areas eligible for immediate return upon completion of necessary procedures based on the Okinawa Consolidation Plan (shown in red in Fig. III-2-4-9) was realized. The use of returned lands is being promoted incrementally. For example, at the former site of the West Futenma Housing Area, which was returned in 2015, the construction of Okinawa Health Medical Center was promoted based on local requests, serving as a model case for the use of returned land. The University of the Ryukyus Hospital was relocated there and opened in January 2025, and the Faculty of Medicine completed its move and began

10 Naha Port, Makiminato Service Area, MCAS Futenma, Camp Zukeran, Camp Kuwae, and Army POL Depot Kuwae Tank Farm No. 1

operations in April of the same year. Based on the joint use of portion of land on Camp Zukeran and under the project for measures targeting areas surrounding defense facilities, Ginowan City developed the access road (Kiyuna Road 23) which opened for use in February of the same year, linking the district's former site with national route 58. In addition, in accordance with the December 2015 Japan-U.S. joint press release titled "Implementation of Bilateral Plans for Consolidating Facilities and Areas in Okinawa" regarding the return of certain important parcels of land ahead of schedule under the Okinawa Consolidation Plan, with specific deadlines attached, the return of these lands has been achieved earlier than originally scheduled under the Consolidation Plan. This has resulted, for example, in the opening of the entire stretch of Ginowan City road 11 in 2021 on land along the east side of MCAS Futenma returned in 2017, which has improved local traffic. Furthermore, in 2022, then Prime Minister Kishida visited the Lower Plaza Housing area (Okinawa City, Kitanakagusuku Village) of Camp Zukeran and announced that Japan and the United States will agree to open the area as a green space for public use ahead of its return to Japan, and its public use began in 2024 as the "Lower Plaza Green Square."

All-out initiatives are being continuously made by the Government to steadily implement the return of land areas south of Kadena Air Base under the Okinawa Consolidation Plan in a manner that visibly mitigates the impact on Okinawa.

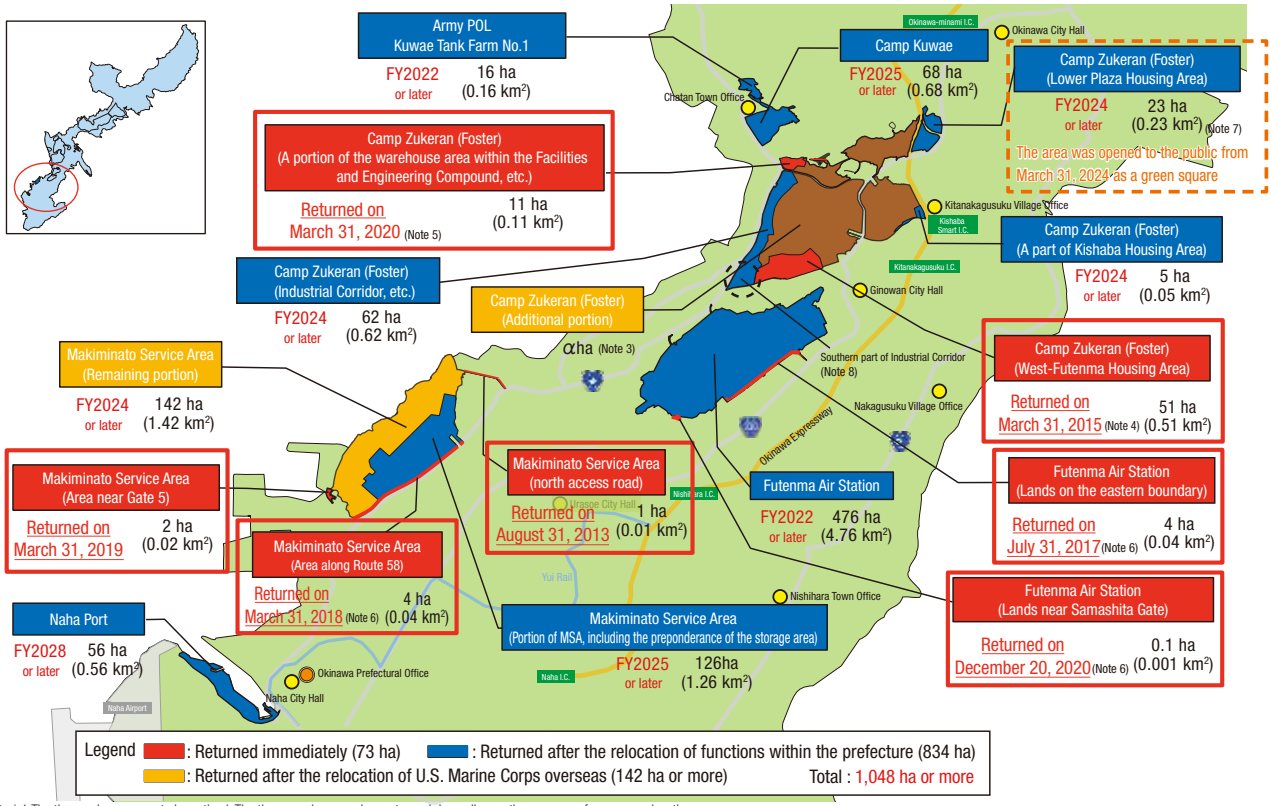
See Fig. III-2-4-8 (Results of the Return of Land Areas South of Kadena Air Base); Fig. III-2-4-9 (Return of Land Areas South of Kadena Air Base (image)); Reference 34 (Estimated Timelines for the Return of Facilities and Areas South of Kadena)

Fig. III-2-4-8 Results of the Return of Land Areas South of Kadena Air Base

Category	Name	Returned	Transferred	Area (ha)
Areas eligible for immediate return in the consolidation plan	Makiminato Service Area (north access road)	August 2013	August 2013	Approx. 1
	Camp Zukeran (West Futenma Housing Area)	March 2015	March 2018	Approx. 51
	Makiminato Service Area (area near Gate 5)	March 2019	March 2021	Approx. 2
	Camp Zukeran (a portion of the warehouse area of the Facilities and Engineering Compound)	March 2020	(Note)	Approx. 11
Areas eligible for return after relocation of functions within Okinawa in the consolidation plan but returned in advance as a result of a separate Japan-U.S. agreement	MCAS Futenma (Lands along the east side)	July 2017	March 2019	Approx. 4
	Makiminato Service Area (Lands along national route 58)	March 2018	September 2019	Approx. 3
	MCAS Futenma (Lands near Samashita Gate)	December 2020	December 2020	Approx. 0.1
	Makiminato Service Area ((Lands along national route 58) laundry area)	May 2021	May 2021	Approx. 0.2

(Note) Scheduled transfer in the future

Fig. III-2-4-9 Return of Land Areas South of Kadena Air Base (image)



(Notes) 1 The time and year seem to be optimal. The time may, however, be postponed depending on the progress of overseas relocation.
2 The area of each land is an approximate figure and may be slightly modified based on the results of future surveys. Total may not match due to rounding off of each figure to the nearest unit (ha).
3 Studies will be made in the process of developing a master plan to determine the feasibility of additional land returns.
4 The area to be returned at Camp Foster (West-Futenma Housing area) was listed as 52 ha in the Consolidation Plan, but it was revised to 51 ha according to actual measurements.
5 The area to be returned at Camp Foster (a portion of the warehouse area of the Facilities and Engineering Compound, etc.) was listed as 10 ha in the Consolidation Plan, but it was revised to 11 ha based on the area to be returned in the JC agreement of September 2013.
6 MCAS Futenma (lands along the east side and near Samashita Gate) and Makiminato Service Area (lands along national route 58) were returned ahead of schedule as a result of a separate Japan-U.S. agreement. Note that the Makiminato Service Area (lands along national route 58) includes the laundry area (0.2 ha) that was returned on May 31, 2021.
7 Japan-U.S. Joint Committee agreed in May 2022 that the two countries will prepare the transformation of the Lower Plaza Housing Area of Camp Foster into a green square for public use before the return, agreed on the joint use of the area for public use as the green square in January, 2024. The area was opened to the public on March 31, 2024.
8 Efforts will be made for the return of the southern part of Industrial Corridor as early as possible with gradual return in mind

6 Relocation of the Marine Corps to Guam

In December 2024, it was announced that a detachment of approximately 100 Marines had started to relocate from Okinawa to Guam as the first phase of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps in Okinawa to locations outside Japan. The continued steady progress of the efforts necessary for the relocation to Guam, which led to the announcement that the move had started, is highly significant—particularly in mitigating the impact of bases on Okinawa.

(1) Size of Relocation

The Roadmap stated that approximately 8,000 personnel of the III MEF and their approximately 9,000 dependents would relocate from Okinawa to Guam by 2014, but at the Japan-U.S. "2+2" Meeting in 2012, the composition of the units to be relocated to Guam and the number of personnel were reviewed. As a result, the MAGTF is to be located in Japan, Guam, and Hawaii, with approximately 9,000 personnel relocated to locations outside of Japan. Meanwhile, the end-state for the U.S. Marine Corps presence in Okinawa is to be consistent with the level of approximately 10,000 personnel envisioned in the Roadmap.

Also in December 2024, the MOD and the U.S. Marine Corps announced that a detachment of approximately 100 logistics support Marines from III MEF began relocating from Okinawa to Guam. It has been confirmed between Japan and the United States that relocations will take place in a phased approach going forward, and over 4,000 U.S. Marine Corps personnel will relocate from Okinawa to Guam. The Government of Japan will continue to cooperate with the U.S. Government to ensure the relocation to Guam.

(2) Costs of the Relocation

Under the Roadmap, the two sides reached an agreement that, of the estimated US$10.27 billion (in U.S. fiscal year 2008 price) cost of the facilities and infrastructure development costs, Japan would provide US$6.09 billion, including US$2.8 billion in direct cash contribution, while the United States

would fund the remaining US$4.18 billion. In February 2009, the Japanese Government and the U.S. Government signed the "Agreement Between the Government of Japan and the Government of the United States of America Concerning the Implementation of the Relocation of III MEF Personnel and Their Dependents from Okinawa to Guam" (the Guam International Agreement).[11] The Agreement legally guarantees and ensures actions taken by Japan and the United States for projects to which Japan provides direct cash contributions.

As part of measures based on this Agreement, the Government of Japan has been providing cash contributions to the U.S. Government in relation to the projects for which Japan has provided financial support since FY2009.[12]

Subsequently, at the Japan-U.S. "2+2" Meeting held in April 2012, the unit composition and the number of personnel to be relocated to Guam were adjusted and it was agreed that the preliminary cost estimate by the U.S. Government for the relocation was US$8.6 billion (in U.S. FY2012 price). With regard to Japan's financial commitment, it was reaffirmed that it was to be the direct cash contribution of up to US$2.8 billion (in U.S. FY2008 price) as stipulated in Article 1 of the Guam International Agreement. It was also confirmed that Japan's equity investment and loans for family housing projects and infrastructure projects would not be utilized.[13]

Moreover, it was stipulated that any funds that had already been provided to the U.S. Government under the Guam International Agreement would be counted as part of the Japanese contribution. Furthermore, as a new initiative, a portion of the direct cash contribution of US$2.8 billion mentioned above would be used to develop training areas in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands as joint-use facilities by Japan and the United States. In addition, it was agreed that the remaining costs and any additional costs would be borne by the United States, and that the two governments were to complete a bilateral cost breakdown.

At the Japan-U.S. "2+2" Meeting in October 2013, a Protocol Amending the Guam International Agreement was also signed to add the stipulations concerning the development of training areas in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the use of these training areas by the JSDF. The limit on Japanese cash contributions remains unchanged at US$2.8 billion (in U.S. FY2008 price).

(3) Environmental Impact Assessment

As for the environmental impact assessment for Guam, the required procedures were conducted to reflect the revisions to the project made by the adjustments to the plan for realignment, and the assessment was completed in August 2015.

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Joint Military Training Environmental Impact Statement (CJMT-EIS), is now being implemented.

(4) Progress of the Guam Relocation Project

The U.S. Government is currently developing facilities in each area of Guam. To date, out of the projects funded by the Government of Japan, a base administrative building, a medical clinic and other facilities have been completed.

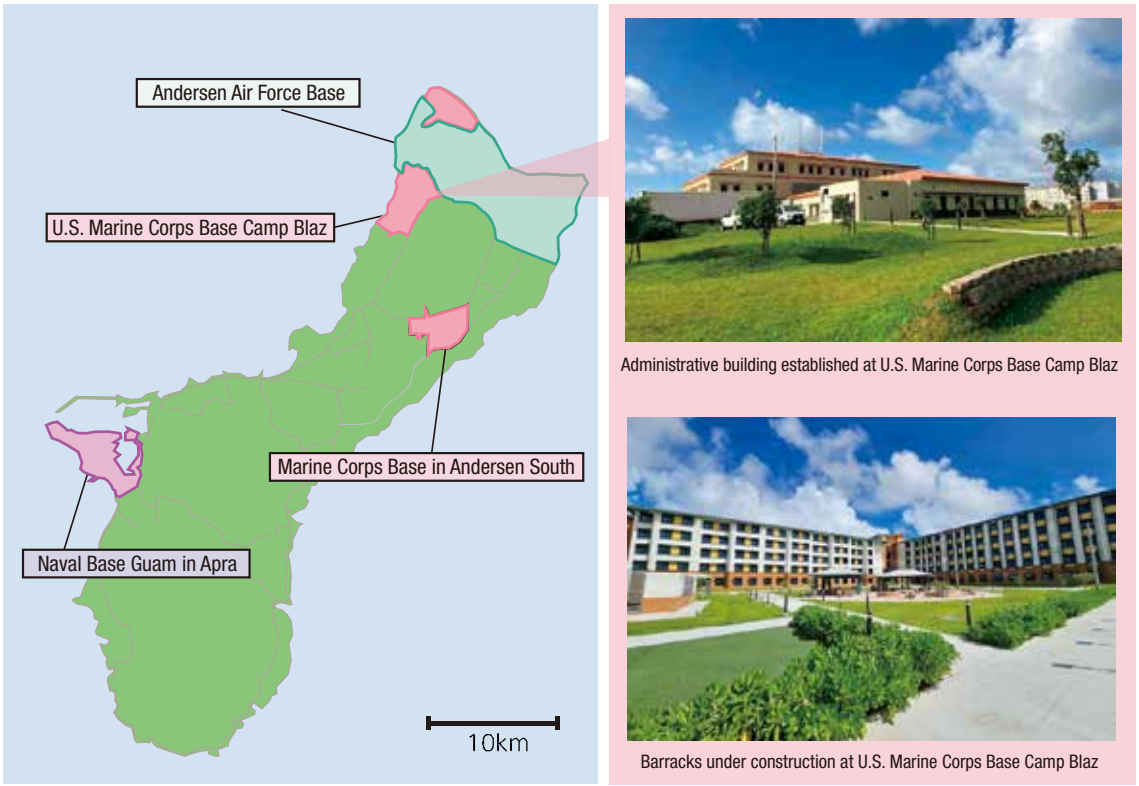
See Fig. III-2-4-10 (Progress of the Guam Relocation Project (image))

11 Agreement Between the Government of Japan and the Government of the United States of America Concerning the Implementation of the Relocation of III Marine Expeditionary Force Personnel and Their Dependents from Okinawa to Guam

12 As for projects for which Japan provides financial support, cash contributions totaling approximately 373 billion yen (including the use of interest generated from the funds provided) have been provided to the U.S. side as of the end of April 2026.

13 In line with this, the special provisions for the operations of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (investment and loan) that had been prescribed by the Act on Special Measures concerning Smooth Implementation of Realignment of United States Forces in Japan were abolished by an act revising part of the act that was enacted on March 31, 2017.

Fig. III-2-4-10 Progress of the Guam Relocation Project (image)



Administrative building established at U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz

Barracks under construction at U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz

Major projects funded by Japan for the Guam relocation project

U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz	Base management office, barracks, fire station, etc.
Marine Corps Base in Andersen South	Training areas
Andersen Air Force Base	Infrastructure development (site preparation, etc.)
Naval Base Guam in Apra	Headquarters building, medical clinic, etc.

7 Other Realignment Initiatives

(1) Aviation Training Relocation (ATR)

Based on the decision that U.S. aircraft from three USFJ facilities and areas – Kadena, Misawa (Aomori Prefecture) and MCAS Iwakuni – would participate for the time being in bilateral training at JSDF facilities, the Aviation Training Relocation[14] (ATR) has been underway since 2007. The MOD has been improving its infrastructure, as required, for the training relocation.

The ATR contributes to enhancing interoperability between the two countries, and also to relocating part of air-to-ground training conducted by using Kadena Air Base. Thus, this training relocation will help noise abatement around Kadena Air Base, thereby contributing to the mitigation of the impact on Okinawa.

In addition to assisting the USFJ, the MOD/JSDF is making efforts to ensure the safety and security of the local community, such as the establishment of a liaison office, facilitating communication with related government agencies, and response to requirements from the local community. These efforts have been contributing to successful training relocation.

See Fig. III-2-4-11 (Overview of the Background to the Aviation Training Relocation)

14 USFJ aircraft conduct bilateral and other training at JSDF facilities, etc.

Fig. III-2-4-11 Overview of the Background to the Aviation Training Relocation

Time of reaching agreements	Overview
May 2006	In the "Japan-U.S. Roadmap for Realignment Implementation," it is confirmed that U.S. aircraft from three USFJ facilities and areas-Kadena, Misawa and MCAS Iwakuni-would participate in bilateral training with the JSDF at JSDF facilities in Chitose, Misawa, Hyakuri, Komatsu, Tsuiki, and Nyutabaru.
January and October 2011	At the Joint Committee, both governments agreed to include Guam as a new training relocation site and to expand the scale of training.
March 2014	At the Joint Committee, both governments agreed to add air-to-ground training using the Misawa Air-to-Ground Range (Misawa City and Rokkasho Village in Aomori Prefecture).
July 2023	At the Joint Committee, both governments agreed to include Alaska as the relocation site.

(2) Training Relocation for MV-22 (Osprey), Etc.

The Government of Japan and the United States Government decided in the "2+2" joint statement of 2013, to utilize the opportunities to participate in various operations in mainland Japan and across the region to reduce the amount of time that MV-22s are deployed and used for the training in Okinawa, so that training outside of Okinawa Prefecture, including mainland Japan, can be increased while maintaining the deterrence of the Alliance. Based on the above, both governments have been moving forward with conducting training of the MV-22 deployed at MCAS Futenma outside of Okinawa Prefecture and so on.

In 2016, it was agreed at the Joint Committee to relocate the training activities of Tilt-Rotor/Rotary Wing aircraft, such as AH-1, CH53, and the MV-22 that are currently deployed at MCAS Futenma, out of Okinawa Prefecture at Japan's expense in order to further promote training outside of Okinawa and mitigate the impact of training activities there.

From the date of the agreement up to March 2026, a total of 25 exercises have been conducted in Guam as well as in Japan at the maneuver areas in Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Gunma, Kanagawa, Niigata, Shizuoka, Shiga, Kagawa, Nagasaki, Oita, Kumamoto, Miyazaki, and Kagoshima prefectures.

The Government plans to continue decreasing the amount of time MV-22s are deployed and used for training in Okinawa by relocating the exercises to mainland Japan and Guam, and will continue to promote initiatives that contribute to further mitigating the impact on Okinawa.

Furthermore, with regard to the safety of MV-22s, prior to the deployment of MV-22s to MCAS Futenma in 2012, the Government established an analysis and assessment team composed of aircraft pilots and experts from inside and outside the Government and confirmed the safety of MV-22 by conducting its own survey, etc. In addition, when Japan made the decision to introduce Ospreys in 2014, the Government reconfirmed their safety by collecting and analyzing all kinds of technical information, not only in the preparation phase, but also after the decision of introduction was made.

Moreover, since 2016, the Government has dispatched GSDF Osprey personnel to the U.S. Marine Corps' training programs, in which they pilot and maintain the aircraft. The Government has reaffirmed that the Osprey is a reliable aircraft that allows for stable maneuvering and maintenance.

Additionally, the U.S. Air Force CV-22s (Osprey) have the same propulsion system as the MV-22 and both aircraft also have the basic structure in common. Therefore, the safety of both aircraft is at the same level.

On top of that, regarding the safety of the Osprey, whenever incidents related to the aircraft's safety or operational restrictions have occurred, the governments of Japan and the United States have coordinated with each other and implemented various safety measures. In fact, operations are currently conducted with various safety measures in place to address the causes of past incidents, including the November 2023 crash of a U.S. Air Force CV-22 off the coast of Yakushima, which enables the prevention of and response to similar incidents.

The MOD has repeatedly affirmed the safety of Osprey and considers there to be no issues. Nonetheless, the MOD has confirmed, at all levels in Japan and the United States, that flight safety remains the top priority for Osprey flight operations in Japan, and that Japan and the United States will continue to cooperate and take all possible measures to ensure safety.

See Reference 35 (Chronology of Osprey Deployment by the U.S. Forces)

(3) Usability of Osprey Deployed by the U.S. Forces in Case of Disaster

The MV-22 is capable of conducting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief activities immediately and over a large range when large-scale disasters occur because of its high performance and multifunctionality. The MV-22s deployed in Okinawa have been dispatched for various relief operations and have also been used for disaster prevention drills since 2014.

For example, the MV-22s were mobilized to support relief operations in response to typhoon damage that affected the Philippines in 2013. The MV-22s were deployed promptly to affected areas that were difficult to access, and transported several hundred isolated victims and about six tons of relief materials in a day. They were also dispatched in response to the 2014 passenger ship sinking accident in the ROK and the 2015 large earthquake in Nepal, where they were utilized for search and rescue activities and transporting personnel and supplies. In Japan as well, when the Kumamoto Earthquake occurred in 2016, MV-22s were dispatched to deliver daily necessities to the disaster-stricken areas.

The CV-22 can also conduct humanitarian assistance and disaster relief activities, including search and rescue missions,

both immediately and over a large range, in the case of a large-scale disaster.

As such, it is expected that the superior capabilities of the Osprey deployed by the U.S. Forces can be showcased in a variety of operations in the future as well.

8 Initiatives for Smooth Implementation of the Realignment of the USFJ

In order to smoothly implement the realignment of the USFJ based on the Roadmap, the Act on Special Measures on Smooth Implementation of the Realignment of United States Forces in Japan (USFJ Realignment Special Measures Act)[15] was enacted in August 2007. Realignment grants, Special Subsidy Rates for Public Projects, and other systems were established based on the law.

In addition, under the U.S. Forces realignment, some USFJ facilities and areas will be returned, and the U.S. Marine Corps in Okinawa will be relocated to Guam. Since these developments may affect the employment of USFJ employees, the Government of Japan will take measures to include education and skills training, which is to help retain their employment.

The act revising part of the USFJ Realignment Special Measures Act including a 10-year extension of the time limit to March 31, 2027 was enacted in March 2017.

See Reference 36 (Outline of the Act on Special Measures on Smooth Implementation of the Realignment of United States Forces, etc. in Japan)

3 Measures Concerning the Stationing of the USFJ

1 Optimization of the Posture of the USFJ

(1) Reorganization of the Marine Littoral Regiment (MLR) of the U.S. Marine Corps Forces in Okinawa

As part of the optimization of the posture of the USFJ, the 12th Marine Regiment located at Camp Hansen in Kin Town, Okinawa is being reorganized into the 12th MLR. Because of this, while the 12th Marine Regiment mainly has artillery firepower as an artillery unit, the reorganized MLR will have a variety of capabilities, including anti-ship strike capabilities with anti-ship missiles, air defense capabilities, logistics support capabilities, and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities.

(2) Establishment of the Composite Watercraft Company at Yokohama North Dock

In April 2023, the U.S. Army's Composite Watercraft Company was established at Yokohama North Dock to strengthen the maritime mobility of the U.S. Forces in emergency situations, including disasters, and it began operations as the 5th Transportation Company in February 2024. The established company will contribute to strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance transportation capabilities in Japan and improve the mobility of the U.S. Forces in the region.

2 Stationing of the U.S. Forces in Okinawa

In comparison to areas such as the U.S. mainland, Hawaii, and Guam, Okinawa is located closer to potential conflict areas that could affect Japan's peace and security, including the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait, but at the same time has the advantage of having a certain distance from these areas that would not heighten military tension there unnecessarily. In addition, Okinawa, comprising a large number of small islands, is located roughly in the center of the Southwestern Islands having a total length of some 1,200 km and close to key sea lines of communication for Japan, which depends on marine transportation for over 99% of its overall international trade. Furthermore, its location is extremely important from the perspective of security, as Okinawa serves as a strategically important target for neighboring countries in both making access to the Pacific from the continent and rejecting access from the Pacific to the continent.

Thus, the stationing of the U.S. Forces in Okinawa, including the U.S. Marine Corps, which can deal with a wide range of missions with high mobility and readiness, along with the above-mentioned geographical characteristics, further ensures the effectiveness of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, strengthens deterrence, and contributes greatly not only to the security of Japan but also to the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

On the other hand, Okinawa has many USFJ facilities and areas such as air bases, maneuver areas, and logistics facilities. As of January 1, 2026, approximately 70% of USFJ facilities and areas (for exclusive use) are concentrated in Okinawa Prefecture, occupying approximately 8% of the

15 Act on Special Measures concerning Smooth Implementation of Realignment of United States Forces in Japan

land area of the prefecture and approximately 14% of the main island of Okinawa. Therefore, it is necessary to make utmost efforts to mitigate the impact on Okinawa, while also considering the above-mentioned security standpoints.

(1) Initiatives for Realignment, Consolidation, and Reduction of USFJ Facilities and Areas in Okinawa

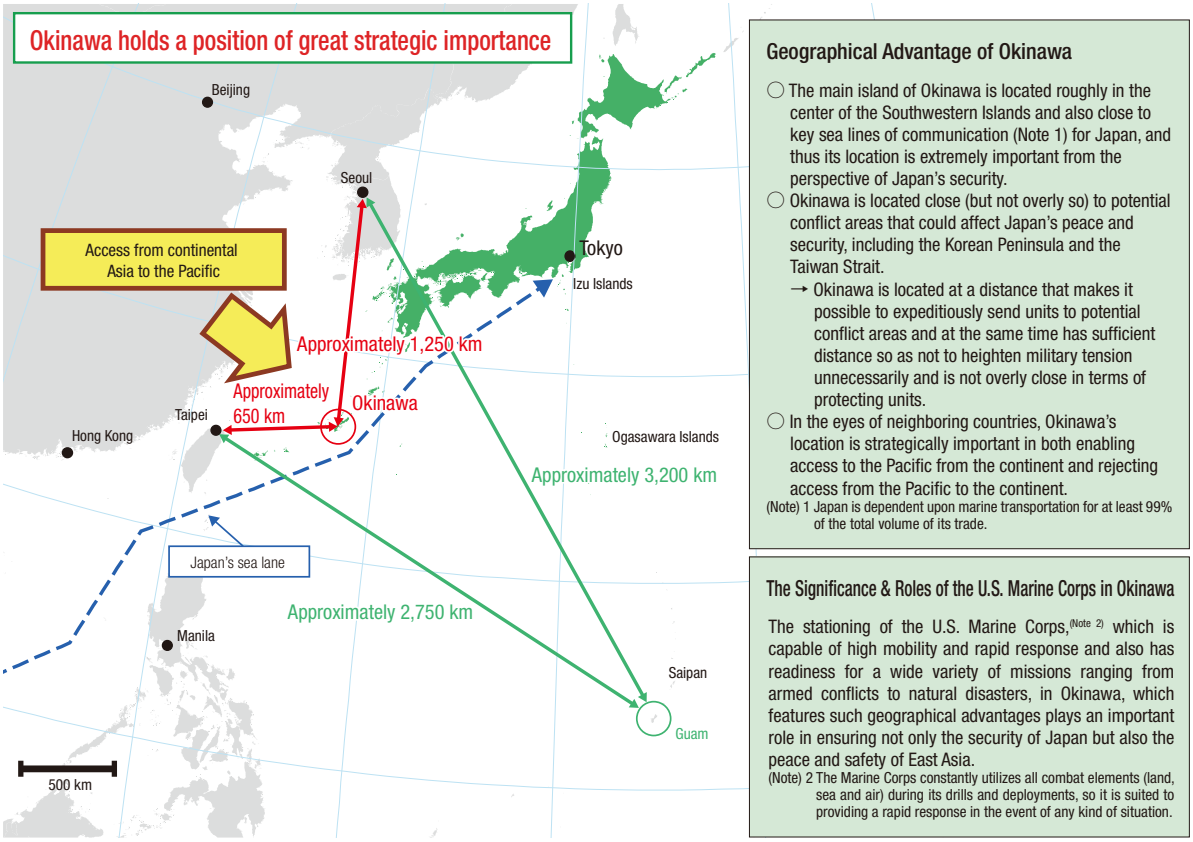
When Okinawa was returned to Japan in 1972, the Government of Japan provided 83 facilities and areas covering approximately 278 square kilometers for exclusive use as USFJ facilities and areas. On the other hand, USFJ facilities and areas were strongly requested to be realigned, consolidated and reduced, on the grounds that they seriously affect the lives of people in Okinawa Prefecture.

Both countries have continued their initiatives to realign, consolidate, and reduce USFJ facilities and areas, centering on those subject to strong local requests, and, in relation to the so-called 23 issues,[16] it was agreed in 1990 that both sides would proceed with the required coordination and procedures toward the return of land. Moreover, it was agreed in 1995 that efforts would also be made to resolve the so-called Three Okinawa Issues: the return of Naha Port (Naha City), the return of Yomitan Auxiliary Airfield, and the relocation of artillery live-fire training over Highway 104.

Subsequently, in response to an unfortunate incident that occurred in 1995, as well as the refusal of the then Governor of Okinawa to sign land lease renewal documents under the Act on Special Measures concerning USFJ Land Release, the Government of Japan decided to devote even greater initiatives toward realignment, consolidation, and reduction, believing that the impact should be shared by the whole nation. In order to hold consultations on issues related to USFJ facilities and areas in Okinawa, the Government of Japan established the Okinawa Action Council between the central government and Okinawa Prefecture, as well as the SACO, and the so-called SACO Final Report was compiled in 1996.

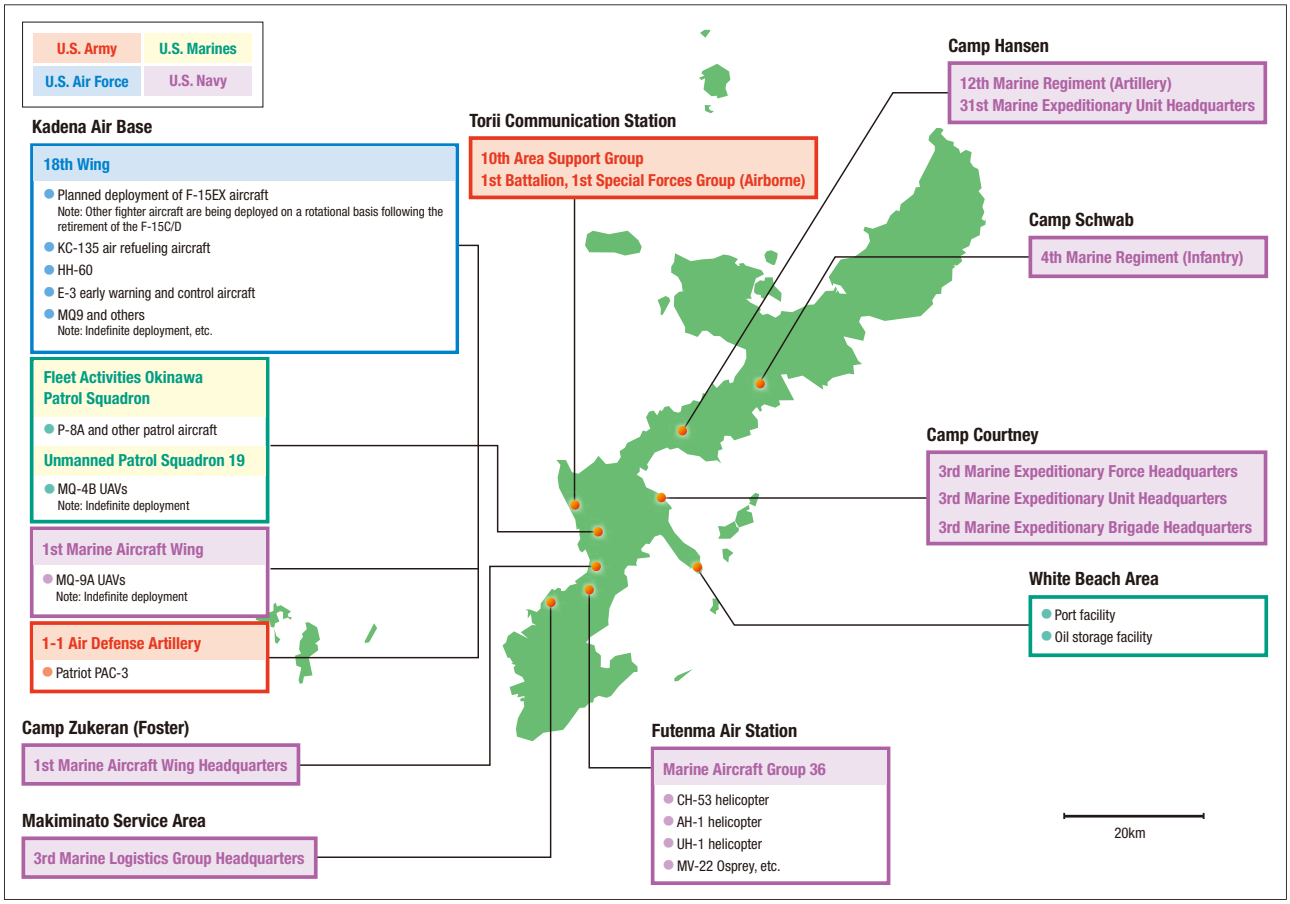
See Fig. III-2-4-12 (The Geopolitical Positioning of Okinawa and the Significance of the U.S. Marine Corps Stationed in Okinawa (image)); Fig. III-2-4-13 (Location of Major U.S. Forces Stationing in Okinawa (As of March 31, 2025)); Reference 37 (Outline of 23 Issues)

Fig. III-2-4-12 The Geopolitical Positioning of Okinawa and the Significance of the U.S. Marine Corps Stationed in Okinawa (image)



16 In 1990, the governments of Japan and the United States agreed to proceed with the land return process for 23 issues, focusing on those with strong local demand.

Fig. III-2-4-13 Location of Major U.S. Forces Stationing in Okinawa (As of March 31, 2025)



(Note) Based on information on the U.S. Forces Japan website and other sources.

(2) Outline of the SACO Final Report

The SACO Final Report stipulates the return of land, the adjustment of training and operational procedures, noise mitigation, and the improvement of operational procedures regarding the SOFA, and also refers to the related facilities and areas covered. The land to be returned based on the implementation of contents included in the SACO Final Report represents approximately 21% (about 50 square kilometers) of USFJ facilities and areas in Okinawa at that time, exceeding the amount of land returned during the period between the reversion of Okinawa and the implementation of the SACO Final Report, which is roughly 43 square kilometers.

See Fig. III-2-4-14 (Facilities and Areas Related to the SACO Final Report (image)); Fig. III-2-4-15 (Changes in Number and Area of the USFJ Facilities and Areas (Exclusive Use) in Okinawa); Reference 38 (The SACO Final Report (tentative translation)); Reference 39 (Progress of the SACO Final Report); Reference 40 (Consultative Bodies on the Mitigation of Impact of Bases on Okinawa)

Fig. III-2-4-14 Facilities and Areas Related to the SACO Final Report (image)

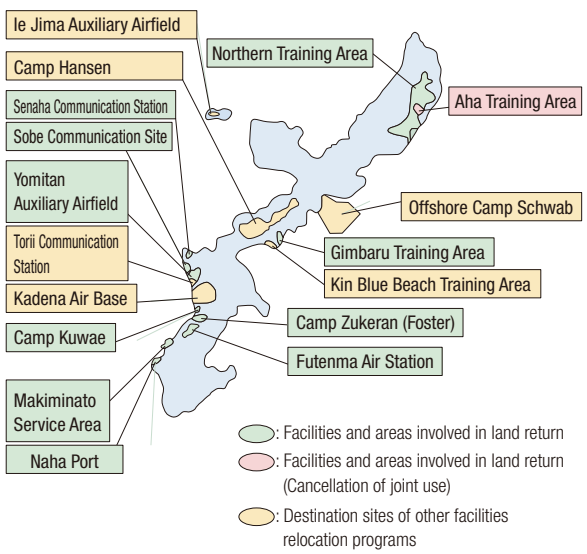
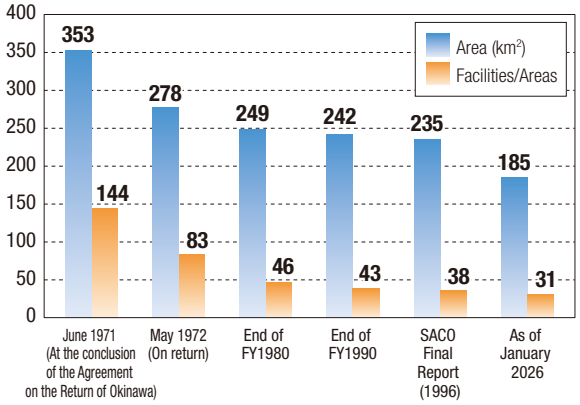


Fig. III-2-4-15 Changes in Number and Area of the USFJ Facilities and Areas (Exclusive Use) in Okinawa



(3) Return of a Major Portion of the Northern Training Area

The condition for returning the Northern Training Area was to relocate seven helipads in the area to be returned to the preexisting training area. However, the Government of Japan reached an agreement with the U.S. side to give considerations for the natural environment and to relocate not all seven but the minimum number of six helipads necessary, and proceeded with the construction work. The relocation of the helipads completed in December 2016, and the return of approximately 4,000 hectares, a major portion of the Northern Training Area located in the villages of Kunigami and Higashi, was achieved based on the SACO Final Report.

The returned land accounts for approximately 20% of USFJ facilities and areas (for exclusive use) in Okinawa. The return is the largest one since the reversion of Okinawa to the mainland, and had been an issue for 20 years since the SACO Final Report in 1996.

Based on the Act on Special Measures Concerning Promotion of Effective and Appropriate Use of the Lands in Okinawa Prefecture Previously Provided for Use by the Stationed Forces, the MOD took measures to remove obstacles (such as soil contamination survey, etc.) so that the landowners, etc., could use returned lands effectively and appropriately, and transferred the land to the landowners in December 2017. In addition, in July 2021, the northern part of the main island of Okinawa, including the returned lands, was inscribed in the World Heritage List as part of the Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, Northern part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island natural site.

3 The USFJ in Kanagawa Prefecture

(1) Deployment of U.S. Aircraft Carrier to Commander Fleet Activities, Yokosuka

The presence of the U.S. Pacific Fleet plays an important role in ensuring maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region as well as regional peace and stability. The U.S. aircraft carrier provides the core capabilities of the Fleet.

The U.S. Navy affirms that it will continue to ensure that all of its nuclear-powered vessels anchoring in Japan's ports, including the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier[17] which is forward-deployed at Commander Fleet Activities, Yokosuka (Kanagawa Prefecture), adhere to the relevant safety policies. For example, the nuclear reactors will normally be shut down while the vessels are anchored, and repair of the nuclear reactors and refueling will not be carried out in Japan. The Government of Japan will also continue to take all possible measures to ensure safety.

(2) Realignment, etc. of USFJ Facilities and Areas

With regard to the realignment of facilities and areas of the USFJ in Kanagawa Prefecture, the release of facilities and areas including Kamiseya Communication Station and Fukaya Communication Site has already been realized based on the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee agreement of October 2004.

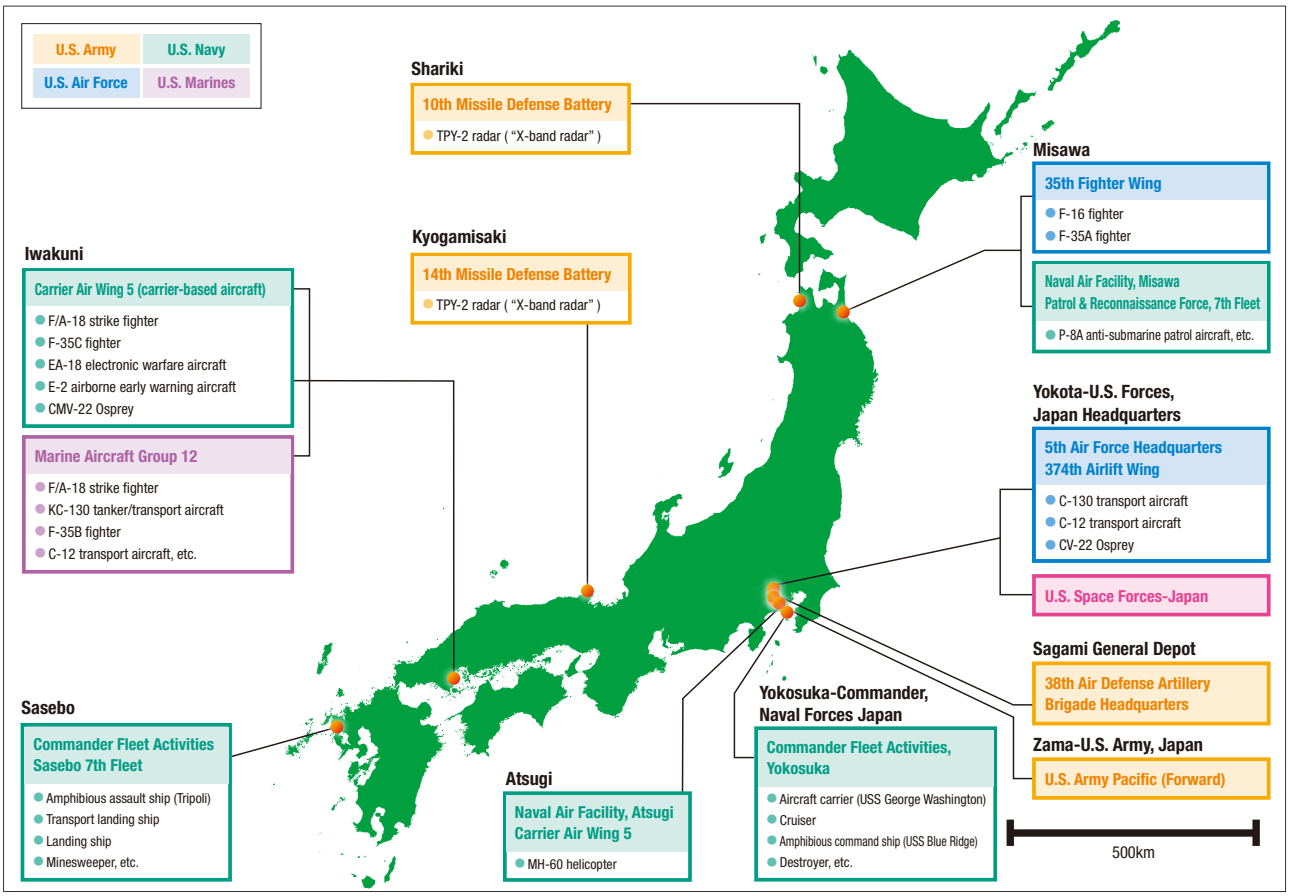
Meanwhile, more than 10 years have passed since the initial agreement, and the security environment surrounding Japan is becoming increasingly severe. Therefore, there have been changes in the U.S. Navy's posture and capabilities, as represented by the increased operations of the U.S. vessels at Commander Fleet Activities, Yokosuka. In light of such circumstances, the following were agreed at the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee in 2018: (1) development of facilities for satisfying the U.S. Navy's facility requirements; (2) start of negotiations on joint use of Negishi Dependent Housing Area to conduct site restoration works; and (3) cancellation of the construction of family housing units in the Yokohama portion of Ikego Housing Area and Navy Annex. Subsequently, joint use of Negishi Dependent Housing Area was agreed upon at the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee in 2019.

Following this, at the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee agreement in March 2026, it was agreed that the Negishi Dependent Housing Area would be returned no later than June 30, 2026. The return of the Negishi Dependent Housing Area marks the completion of the return of a majority of the approximately 419 hectares scheduled to be returned under the October 2004 agreement on the realignment of U.S. military facilities and areas within Kanagawa Prefecture, which was reached 22 years ago.

17 Nuclear-powered aircraft carriers do not need refueling and they are able to maintain high speeds necessary for the operations of aircraft, giving them excellent combat and operational capabilities.

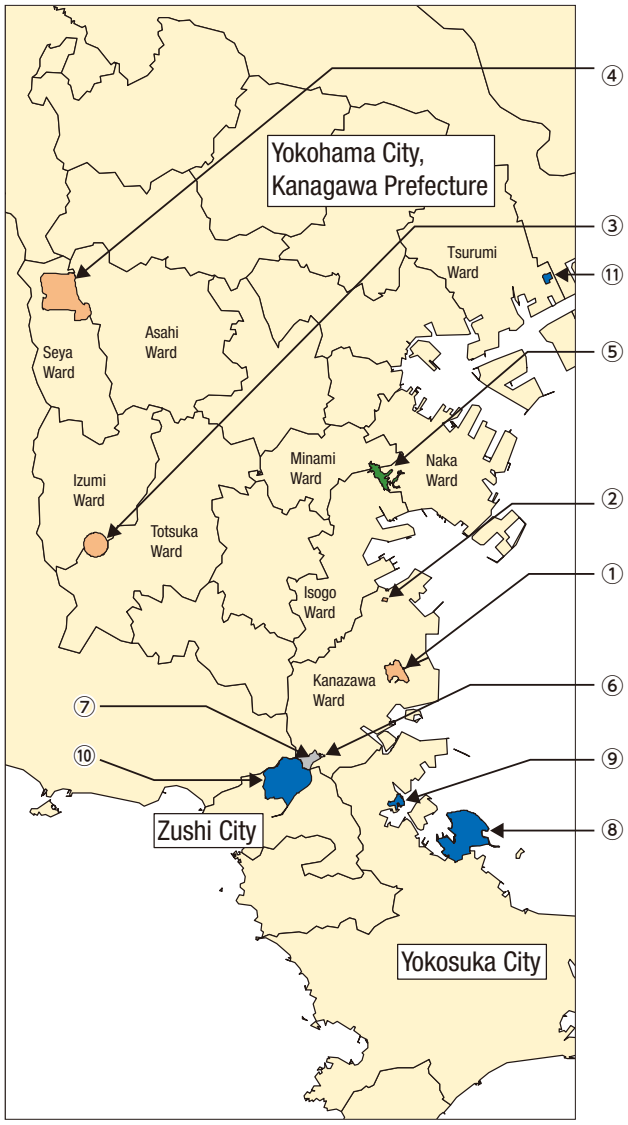
See Fig. III-2-4-16 (Locations of Major U.S. Forces Stationing in Japan (Excluding Okinawa Prefecture) (As of March 31, 2025)); Fig. III-2-4-17 (Realignment of USFJ Facilities and Areas in Kanagawa Prefecture (image))

Fig. III-2-4-16 Locations of Major U.S. Forces Stationing in Japan (Excluding Okinawa Prefecture) (As of March 31, 2025)



(Note) Based on information on the U.S. Forces Japan website and other sources.

Fig. III-2-4-17 Realignment of USFJ Facilities and Areas in Kanagawa Prefecture (image)



Japan-U.S. Joint Committee agreement of October 2004

Location	Name	Location	Area (ha)	Plan for land return, etc.
①	Koshiba POL Depot	Kanazawa Ward, Yokohama City	Approx. 53 ha	Returned in December, 2005
②	Tomioka Storage Area	Kanazawa Ward, Yokohama City	Approx. 3 ha	Returned in May, 2009
③	Fukaya Communication Site	Izumi Ward, Yokohama City	Approx. 77 ha	Returned in June, 2014
④	Kamiseya Communication Station	Seya Ward and Asahi Ward, Yokohama City	Approx. 242 ha	Returned in June, 2015
⑤	Negishi Dependent Housing Area	Naka Ward, Minami Ward and Isogo Ward, Yokohama City	Approx. 43 ha	Scheduled to be returned in June 2026
⑥	Detached part of Ikego Housing Area and Navy Annex	Kanazawa Ward, Yokohama City	Approx. 1 ha	Return procedures to begin upon completion of the current use
⑦	Ikego Housing Area and Navy Annex	Yokohama City Area	—	Construction of family housing, etc.

: Returned

Japan-U.S. Joint Committee agreement of November 2018

[Development of facilities]

Location	Name	Location	Details
⑧	U.S. Fleet Activities, Yokosuka	Yokosuka City	Bachelor enlisted quarters
⑨	Urago Storage Area	Yokosuka City	A wharf
⑩	Ikego Housing Area and Navy Annex	Zushi City Area	Living support facilities, fitness center, maintenance shop and fire station
⑪	Tsurumi POL Depot	Tsurumi Ward, Yokohama City	A fire station

[Joint use and return]

Location	Name	Location	Area	Details
⑤	Negishi Dependent Housing Area	Naka Ward, Minami Ward and Isogo Ward, Yokohama City	Approx. 43 ha	A Japan-U.S. consultation concerning joint use of the Negishi Dependent Housing Area will commence with the aim of promptly carrying out site restoration work. Consultation on the specific return date will be held between the two governments depending on the progress of the site restoration work. (*Scheduled to be returned in June 2026)

[Cancellation of construction]

Location	Name	Location	Details
⑦	Ikego Housing Area and Navy Annex	Yokohama City Area	Cancellation of construction of family housing, etc.

Section 5 Japan-U.S. Bilateral Training and Exercises

Japan-U.S. bilateral exercises play a significant role in enhancing the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. The Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) has consistently conducted joint training involving different JSDF services 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 Japan and the United States' unified commitment to and capacity for achieving peace and stability in the region.

1 Training that Contributes to Strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance

1 Japan-U.S. Bilateral Joint Exercises

The JSDF has been conducting the Japan-U.S. bilateral joint exercises "Keen Sword" (field training exercise) and "Keen Edge" (command post exercise) to rehearse JSDF operational procedures and the Japan-U.S. Joint Response Plan for armed attack situations, etc., as well as to improve the readiness of the JSDF and the interoperability of Japan and the United States.

In FY2025, the Japan-U.S. bilateral joint exercise for FY2025 "Keen Edge 26" was conducted to train and validate Japan-U.S. joint responses to various contingencies and the joint operations of the JSDF, with the aim of maintaining and improving bilateral joint operational capabilities.

The Australian Defence Force participated in this exercise to enhance cooperation with like-minded countries.

2 Japan-U.S. Bilateral Exercises of Each JSDF Service

(1) Ground Self Defense Force

The GSDF is strengthening its operational and strategic coordination with the U.S. Army and Marine Corps at the Central and Pacific levels. Bilateral exercises, in conjunction with high-level exchanges, have continued to evolve and develop as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the Japan-U.S. joint response posture.

In FY2025, the field exercise with the U.S. Army, "Rising Thunder" was conducted. In addition to live-fire training integrated with intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities conducted by unmanned reconnaissance aircraft and other assets, the training also included countermeasures to drone attacks, with the aim of enhancing the two forces' operational capabilities, tactical skills, and interoperability.

In September 2025, the field exercise with the U.S. Marine Corps, "Resolute Dragon 25" was conducted. It focused on cross-domain operations and coordination based on the U.S. Marine Corps' Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO),[1] while rehearsing a series of operations for island defense. This exercise, conducted in Kyushu and Hokkaido by the Western Army and U.S. Marine Corps in Okinawa, was the largest exercise involving the U.S. Marine Corps ever held in Japan. This fiscal year, given the increasingly severe and complex security environment surrounding Japan, the U.S. Army's ground-launched mid-range missile system, Typhon, was deployed at MCAS Iwakuni for the U.S. military's unilateral training as part of this exercise.

From January to February 2026, GSDF conducted the "North Wind 26" field exercise with the U.S. Army. The exercise involved field training in snow-covered and cold-weather regions, as well as regiment- and battalion-level command and staff operations, contributing to the enhancement of tactical proficiency, operational capabilities, and interoperability with the U.S. Forces. In addition, a platoon from the Canadian Army participated as part of the U.S. Army for the first time in a Japan-U.S. bilateral exercise held in Japan.



"North Wind 26"

1 A new operational concept developed by the U.S. Marine Corps based on recent advancements in long-range equipment, in which small-scale, mobile bases are deployed temporarily on islands and along coastlines to conduct surveillance, information gathering, logistical support, and other activities. Rather than relying on large bases, dispersing and repositioning these bases makes them more difficult to attack and provides support to units active on the front line.

VOICE

Foundations of Allied Readiness

Lieutenant General **Roger Turner**, then Commanding General, III Marine Expeditionary Force, U.S. Marine Corps

Deterrence in the 21st century is achieved through credible capability and unquestionable resolve. Daily, the Marines and Sailors of the III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) and the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) forge our collective readiness and solidify our response capabilities through persistent, integrated efforts. Sustained engagement ensures our forces are not merely operating in the same space but are truly interoperable: able to communicate, deploy, maneuver, and sustain each other as a cohesive whole. As we rehearse this integration during exercises such as Iron Fist, Resolute Dragon, and Keen Sword, III MEF and the JSDF demonstrate the combined collaboration necessary to defend Japan and support our mutual interests. This is the bedrock of our ability to respond decisively to any crisis, sending a clear message that aggression against the alliance will be met with a swift, unified, and overwhelming response.

To address emerging Indo-Pacific challenges, III MEF Marines and Sailors focus on strengthening Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) capabilities. The largest of these efforts is our annual Exercise Resolute Dragon. During the 2025 iteration, approximately 5,200 U.S. Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, and Airmen, alongside 14,000 JSDF service members, practiced EABO and Cross-Domain Operations across the Japanese archipelago. Demonstrating the capability of the bilateral force at both operational and tactical levels, Resolute Dragon is a tangible representation of our ability to respond to crisis alongside our Japanese Allies. During this exercise, III MEF's 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and the JSDF transported joint fires capabilities to key maritime terrain using a mix of U.S. and Japanese aircraft, deploying the Navy Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System (NMESIS), Marine Air Defense Integrated Systems (MADIS), Patriot missile batteries, and Japanese Type 12 Surface-to-Ship Missile systems. From Hokkaido to Yonaguni, our bilateral team demonstrated the ability to rapidly position combat power on critical terrain.

Further reinforcing our combined strategic impact, annual exercises like Iron Fist serve as a visible symbol of the Alliance's strength. The scale of this exercise, which brings together approximately 3,500 U.S. personnel with their partners in the GSDF's Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade (ARDB), reflects our deep commitment to integrated readiness. The exercise progressively builds combat power by rehearsing amphibious assaults and bilateral land operations. Critically, it strengthens our cohesive command and control, enabling the employment of dispersed amphibious forces in highly contested environments where communications may be degraded or denied.

Our partnership with the JSDF to protect sovereign Japanese territory extends across the full range of military operations, including humanitarian support. During Joint Exercise 07, III MEF's 3rd Marine Logistics Group and 12th Marine Littoral Regiment operated alongside the GSDF on Ishigaki Island to rehearse humanitarian assistance and disaster relief scenarios. This included establishing an acute-care ward for stabilizing patients and rehearsing casualty movement, demonstrating unmatched and integrated response capabilities.

As the U.S-Japan Alliance strengthens bilaterally, we continue to seek opportunities for multilateral collaboration. In 2025, the 40th iteration of Exercise Balikatan saw more than 14,000 troops from the United States, Japan, Australia, and the Philippines training shoulder-to-shoulder. Through six challenging all-domain field events across the Philippine archipelago, the combined force honed its air and missile defense, counter-landing, and maritime security skills.

The U.S.-Japan Alliance is not static; it is a dynamic partnership that continuously evolves. Exercises like Iron Fist, Resolute Dragon, and Balikatan exemplify the disciplined cooperation that underpins our Alliance. As we look ahead, III Marine Expeditionary Force will continue to stand ironclad with our esteemed ally, building upon our proud seven-decade legacy. Our forward-deployed, integrated, and lethal force is the embodiment of our commitment to the defense of Japan and a peaceful, prosperous Indo-Pacific. We are, and will remain, ready to "fight now."



Iron Fist 26 | 31st MEU bilateral urban operations training



Resolute Dragon 25 Opening Ceremony

(2) Maritime Self Defense Force

The MSDF has traditionally conducted bilateral exercises with the U.S. Navy proactively, and is working to enhance the effectiveness of Japan-U.S. joint response as well as cross-domain operation capabilities through Japan-U.S. bilateral exercises with naval vessels and aircraft, special anti-submarine exercises, special mine warfare training, medical special training, and Japan-U.S. medical joint training.

For example, the MSDF has consistently conducted bilateral exercises with U.S. navy carrier strike groups and conducted a wide range of Japan-U.S. bilateral exercises in the waters surrounding Japan, the East China Sea, and the South China Sea, thereby ceaselessly strengthening the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. alliance. The MSDF actively conducts Japan-U.S. bilateral exercises involving other services, including bilateral exercises with the GSDF and the U.S. Marine Corps, as well as "Rescue Flag Iwakuni," a search and rescue exercise with the ASDF and the U.S. Air Force, to strengthen comprehensive deterrence and response capabilities.

(3) Air Self Defense Force

The ASDF is working to reinforce the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance by participating in "Red Flag-Alaska," a U.S. Air Force exercise, "Cope North," a bilateral exercise with the U.S. Air Force (a trilateral exercise with Australia since 2011), as well as the U.S.-hosted Exercise "Resolute Force Pacific," from July to August 2025. In addition, the ASDF is working to enhance the effectiveness of Japan-U.S. joint response as well as cross-domain operation capabilities through air combat training, intercept training, defensive counter air training, and search and rescue training with the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, as well as other Japan-U.S. bilateral exercises.

See Reference 31 (Record of Main Japan-U.S. Bilateral Exercises in FY2025)

MOVIE: Japan-U.S. Bilateral Exercise
URL: https://youtube.com/watch?v=uYXL8fJjQio

MOVIE: 2025 "Resolute Dragon 25" live-fire training with U.S. Marine Corps in Japan
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VF7Pr3mT29I

2 Multilateral Joint Exercises Involving Japan, the United States, and Third-Party Countries

Each JSDF service is actively engaged in high-level multilateral joint exercises with the participation of not only the United States but also third-party countries. By conducting training with Australian and European forces, the JSDF has been working to enhance its tactical skills and strengthen its coordination and interoperability with the armed forces of other countries to reinforce Japan's deterrence and response capabilities.

1 Joint Multilateral Joint Exercises Involving Japan, the United States, and Third-Party Countries

In September 2025, the JSDF conducted the Japan-U.S.-ROK trilateral exercise "Freedom Edge 25" covering multiple domains with the U.S. and ROK forces. During this exercise, training in maritime operations, air operations, logistical support operations, and responses to cyberattacks and other threats were conducted with the aim of enhancing the forces' tactical capabilities and improving Japan-U.S.-ROK interoperability across multiple domains.



"Freedom Edge 25"

2 Multilateral Joint Exercises of Each JSDF Service Involving Japan, the United States, and Third-Party Countries

(1) Ground Self Defense Force

a. FY2025 Field Training Exercise with U.S. and Australian Forces "Southern Jackaroo 25"

Through May to June 2025, the GSDF participated in a field exercise held in Australia with U.S. and Australian forces. This exercise consisted of training on a series of tactical operations including warning, offensive combat, and defensive combat, utilizing Australia's excellent training facilities in the assembly area, as well as live-fire training, with the aim of enhancing the operational capabilities of GSDF units and strengthening their coordination with U.S. and Australian military units.

b. FY2025 Field Training Exercise with U.S. and Australian Forces "Orient Shield 25"

In September 2025, the GSDF conducted a field exercise during which the participants exercised through practical operations, coordination procedures for conducting combined operations while under their respective chains of command.

The Australian units participated for the first time in a joint Japan-U.S. bilateral field training in Japan. The exercise included trilateral Japan-U.S.-Australia joint combat training, joint live-fire training, and joint medical training, as well as bilateral Japan-Australia joint ISR training and Japan-U.S. joint base security training, all with the aim of enhancing operational capabilities.

c. Japan-U.S.-Australia Multilateral Command Post Exercise "YS-89"

YS-89, conducted in Japan from August to September 2025, is one of the largest command post exercises by each service of the Japan, the U.S., and Australian armies.

During this exercise, participants rehearsed command and staff operations and Japan-U.S.-Australia coordination procedures in the event of joint operations among the GSDF and U.S. and Australian forces, strengthening the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance as well as trilateral coordination among Japan, the United States, and Australia.



"Orient Shield 25"

MOVIE: "Southern Jackaroo 25"
URL: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=1QUEkCBg4yM&pp=ygUb44K144K244Oz44K444Oj44OD44Kr44Or44O8

(2) Maritime Self Defense Force

a. Japan-U.S.-Australia Information Warfare Conference "Blue Spectrum 25"

In March 2025, the MSDF held an information warfare conference on cyber response with the U.S. Navy and Royal Australian Navy. This conference aimed to strengthen coordination among the information warfare units of Japan, the United States, and Australia, and to enhance interoperability with the U.S. and Australian navies' information warfare units.

b. Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Multilateral Exercise "Malabar 25"

In November 2025, the MSDF conducted a multilateral exercise with the U.S. Navy, Indian Navy, Royal Australian Navy, and the Royal Australian Air Force in Guam and its surrounding sea and airspace. The MSDF destroyer "Hyuga" and P-1 participated in the exercise, which included anti-submarine warfare and anti-surface warfare, aimed at improving interoperability with the participating countries.

c. Multilateral Joint Exercise "Pacific Vanguard" Hosted by U.S. Forces

From August to September 2025, the MSDF participated in "Pacific Vanguard 25" conducted in the vicinity of Guam. This multilateral joint exercise, hosted by the U.S. Forces, involved the participation of five countries: Japan, the United States, Australia, the Republic of Korea, and New Zealand. During this exercise, the MSDF destroyers "Ise" and "Suzunami," the replenishment ship "Oumi," and a submarine conducted missile firing drills and anti-surface warfare training with the participating countries, which enhanced the MSDF's tactical capabilities and strengthened coordination with the participating navies.

(3) Air Self Defense Force

a. "Resolute Force Pacific" Exercise Hosted by the U.S. Forces

From July to August 2025, the ASDF participated in "Resolute Force Pacific," an exercise hosted by the U.S. Forces. During this exercise, air defense combat training by Japanese and U.S. fighter aircraft was conducted in the airspace surrounding Japan, and the two countries conducted exercises such as joint patient evacuation drills at JSDF facilities and USFJ facilities and areas within Japan, with the aim of enhancing interoperability under a strong Japan-U.S. Alliance.

b. Bushido Guardian 25

From September to October 2025, Japan hosted a Japan-U.S.-Australia trilateral exercise involving the participation of F-35As from Japan, the United States, and Australia, the first of such exercise to be held in Japan.

During this exercise, air defense combat training using fighter aircraft and joint maintenance training on the ground were conducted, with the aim of fostering mutual understanding and confidence-building, as well as enhancing interoperability among the air forces of Japan, the United States, and Australia.

See Chapter 3, Section 2-2 (Multilateral Exercises with Like-Minded Countries and Others)



"Pacific Vanguard 25"



"Bushido Guardian 25"

MOVIE: "Bushido Guardian 25"
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJIONq8lApA

Chapter 3

Cooperation with Like-Minded Countries and Others

In situations where the need for international cooperation in the security and defense fields is increasing in an unprecedented manner, the Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces (MOD/JSDF) is required to actively contribute to ensuring the security of Japan, the peace and stability of the region and the peace, stability and prosperity of the entire international community.

The first defense objective of the National Defense Strategy of Japan (NDS) is to shape a security environment that does not tolerate unilateral changes to the status quo by force, in cooperation with Japan's ally, like-minded countries and others. Therefore, the NDS calls for Japan to promote efforts that contribute to realizing a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) from the perspective that it is extremely important to reinforce collaboration with not only its ally but also as many countries as possible.

In addition, it is essential to deepen cooperation and coordination with its ally and like-minded countries to counter unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts and to safeguard the security environment of Japan.

Furthermore, Japan will also more actively advance its efforts to solve global security issues and others, including securing the freedom and safety of maritime navigation and overflight, coordination and cooperation with relevant countries in relation to the use of the space and cyber domains, international peace cooperation activities, cooperation on climate change and maritime security, arms control and disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

For the implementation of these efforts, Japan will, while placing the Japan-U.S. Alliance as the key pillar of its security policy, proactively promote multilateral and multilayered defense cooperation and exchanges, taking into account characteristics of the region as well as situation of each country. In doing so, Japan will further promote the establishment of institutional frameworks such as **Reciprocal Access Agreements (RAA)**, **Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreements (ACSA)** and **Agreements concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology** from the perspective of effectively promoting the strengthening of collaboration with like-minded countries and others.

See Fig. III-3-1-1 (The MOD's Efforts Under the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) (image))

KEY WORD

Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA)

Its purpose is to facilitate the implementation of cooperative activities between the forces of the two countries, such as joint training and disaster relief, establishing procedures for the cooperative activities conducted by defense force of one country while visiting the other country, and to define the status of the visiting force.
As of April 2026, Japan has concluded RAAs with Australia, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines.

KEY WORD

Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)

It establishes between the following signatory countries the basic terms and conditions for the mutual provision of goods and services necessary for joint training, UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), humanitarian international relief operations, operations to deal with large-scale disasters, and others.
As of April 2026, Japan has concluded ACSAs with the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, India, Germany and Italy, and signed ACSAs with the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the Philippines.

REFERENCE: Multilateral and multilayered security cooperation
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/exchange/index.html

MOVIE: The MOD's Efforts under the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific"
URL: https://youtu.be/q__RHctUc0I

REFERENCE: New Plan for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" (Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
URL: https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/fp/pp/page3_003666.html

KEY WORD

Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology

An international agreement that establishes a general legal framework for the transfer of defense equipment and technology between signatory countries. Specifically, it establishes procedures for deciding and confirming individual transfers and obligates them to properly use and manage transferred defense equipment and technology.

As of April 2026, Japan has concluded such agreements with the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, India, the Philippines, France, Germany, Malaysia, Italy, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Thailand, Sweden, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Mongolia and Bangladesh and signed one with Canada. (*Japan concluded an Exchange of Notes concerning the Transfer of Arms and Military Technologies to the United States of America with the United States and a Japan-U.K. Agreement concerning Transfer of Arms and Military Technologies with the United Kingdom.)

Fig. III-3-1-1 The MOD's Efforts Under the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) (Image)

The MOD's Efforts Under the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) (Image)

Background

- ○ In August 2016, then Prime Minister Abe unveiled the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" concept in his keynote speech in the 6th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) held in Kenya.
- ○ Japan's fundamental aim is to foster regional stability and prosperity by improving connectivity between Asia and Africa through a free and open Indo-Pacific region.
- ○ Then Prime Minister Kishida announced Japan's new plan for a FOIP in his policy speech at the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) held in India in March 2023.
- ○ In May 2026, Prime Minister Takaichi delivered a foreign policy speech in Hanoi, Viet Nam, announcing the updated FOIP

Basic concepts of "Free and Open Indo-Pacific"

- ○ The Indo-Pacific region is the center of the world vitality and home to more than half the world population; realizing the stable and autonomous development in this region is crucial for the stability and prosperity of the world.
- ○ FOIP aims to promote free and dynamic economic and social activities throughout the Indo-Pacific region and achieve prosperity across the region as a whole.

Priority areas of the Updated FOIP

(1) Building an economic infrastructure for the age of AI and data, including strengthening supply chain resilience for energy and critical materials
(2) Co-creation of economic growth opportunities and sharing rules through public-private collaboration
(3) Enhancing cooperation in the field of security to ensure regional peace and stability

✓ **The Government of Japan will work as one to realize FOIP**

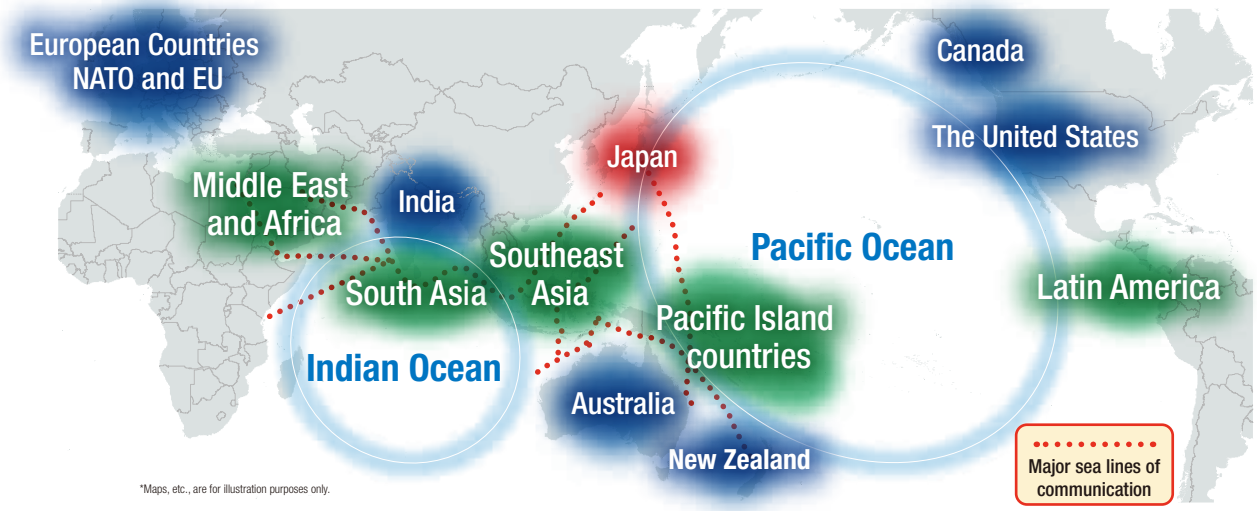
Characteristics of the Indo-Pacific Region

- ○ The Indo-Pacific region is at the center of global economic dynamism and home to the largest share of the world's population. Key sea lines of communication are located in the Indo-Pacific area; as a result, regional stability is essential to Japan's security and prosperity.
- ○ Meanwhile, there are various challenges within the region, including rapid military modernization and intensified military activities.
- ○ All countries in the region are taking measures to respond to these rapid changes in the environment.

Aspects of MOD's Approach

- ○ Securing the stable use of major sea lines of communication by defense cooperation and exchange activities
- ○ Preventing contingencies through confidence-building and mutual understanding
- ○ Contributing to peace and stability through active engagement in the region, in cooperation with partner countries

✓ **There are many security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region**
✓ **Creating a favorable security environment for Japan by leveraging defense cooperation and exchange activities**



- ○ The MOD/JSDF is enhancing defense cooperation and exchanges with countries in the Indo-Pacific region. This enhanced engagement encompasses Southeast Asia, South Asia and Pacific Islands, in which several key sea lines of communication are located; Middle East, a key region in terms of energy security; and Africa and Latin America.
- ○ The MOD/JSDF is collaborating positively with Indo-Pacific countries such as the United States, Australia, India, Canada, New Zealand, and also countries in Europe including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy, all of which share values inherent to the FOIP Vision and have ties to the region.

✓ **As "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" is an inclusive vision, Japan welcomes cooperation with all countries that share its values.**

Section 1 Strategic Promotion of Multilateral and Multilayered Defense Cooperation

1 Significance, etc. of Collaboration with Like-Minded Countries and Others

1 Significance and Changes of Cooperation with Like-Minded Countries, Etc.

The peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region is closely related to Japan's security. In addition, with increasingly changeable and complicated global power dynamics and escalation of interstate competition encompassing political, economic, military and other aspects, they are also becoming a more important issue for the international community.

Thus, taking into account the international situation, regional characteristics and situations and security issues that other nations face, the Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces (MOD/JSDF) intends to strategically promote multilateral and multilayered defense cooperation and exchanges, so that each country can build mutual trust and work together to solve regional security issues.

It is also necessary to further coordinate with each other even in peacetime to deter unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts and to be able to receive support from the ally, like-minded countries, etc. in various contingencies.

Defense cooperation and exchanges have been delivered in the forms of high-level meetings; "cooperation and exchanges among people" introducing working-level talks, bilateral/multilateral training and exercises; "cooperation and exchanges among troops" such as calling at ports and airports by the JSDF; "capacity building" in which human resource development and technical support are provided to other countries in security and defense fields; "defense equipment and technology cooperation" which is conducted to secure homeland security and promote contribution to peace/international cooperation, etc.; and others.

The MOD/JSDF has long strived to alleviate any sense of caution and to foster a collaborative and cooperative atmosphere by building face-to-face relationships through human cooperation and exchanges including bilateral dialogues. In addition, the MOD/JSDF has recently enhanced bilateral defense relationships from traditional exchanges to deeper cooperation in a phased manner by appropriately combining various means, including bilateral/multilateral training and exercises, capacity building, defense equipment and technology cooperation and the development of institutional frameworks such as RAA and ACSA.

In addition, multilateral security cooperation and dialogue are in the process of evolving from those that focus on dialogue to those that focus on cooperation that seeks to maintain and strengthen international order. It is important to promote bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation and exchanges in a multifaceted and multilayered manner to create an ideal security environment.

See Fig. III-3-1-2 (Multilateral and Multilayered Security Cooperation (image)); Fig. III-3-1-3 (Defense Cooperation and Exchanges (Defense Cooperation and Exchange Tools)); Fig. III-3-1-4 (Number of High-level Bilateral Dialogues and Consultations (April 2025-March 2026)); Fig. III-3-1-5 (Visit to Ports and Airports by JSDF (April 2025-March 2026)); Reference 41 (Situations Concerning the Conclusion of Agreements); Reference 42 (International Student Acceptance Record (Number of Newly Accepted Students in FY2025))

Fig. III-3-1-2 Multilateral and Multilayered Security Cooperation (Illustration)

The Situation of Collaboration Spreading Across the World

Based on institutional frameworks such as the Information Security Agreement, the Agreements Concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, ACSA, and RAA, we are building a multilayered network of cooperation that combines people-to-people and unit-level exchanges, capacity-building support, and defense equipment and technology cooperation, thereby fostering both bilateral and multilateral partnerships.

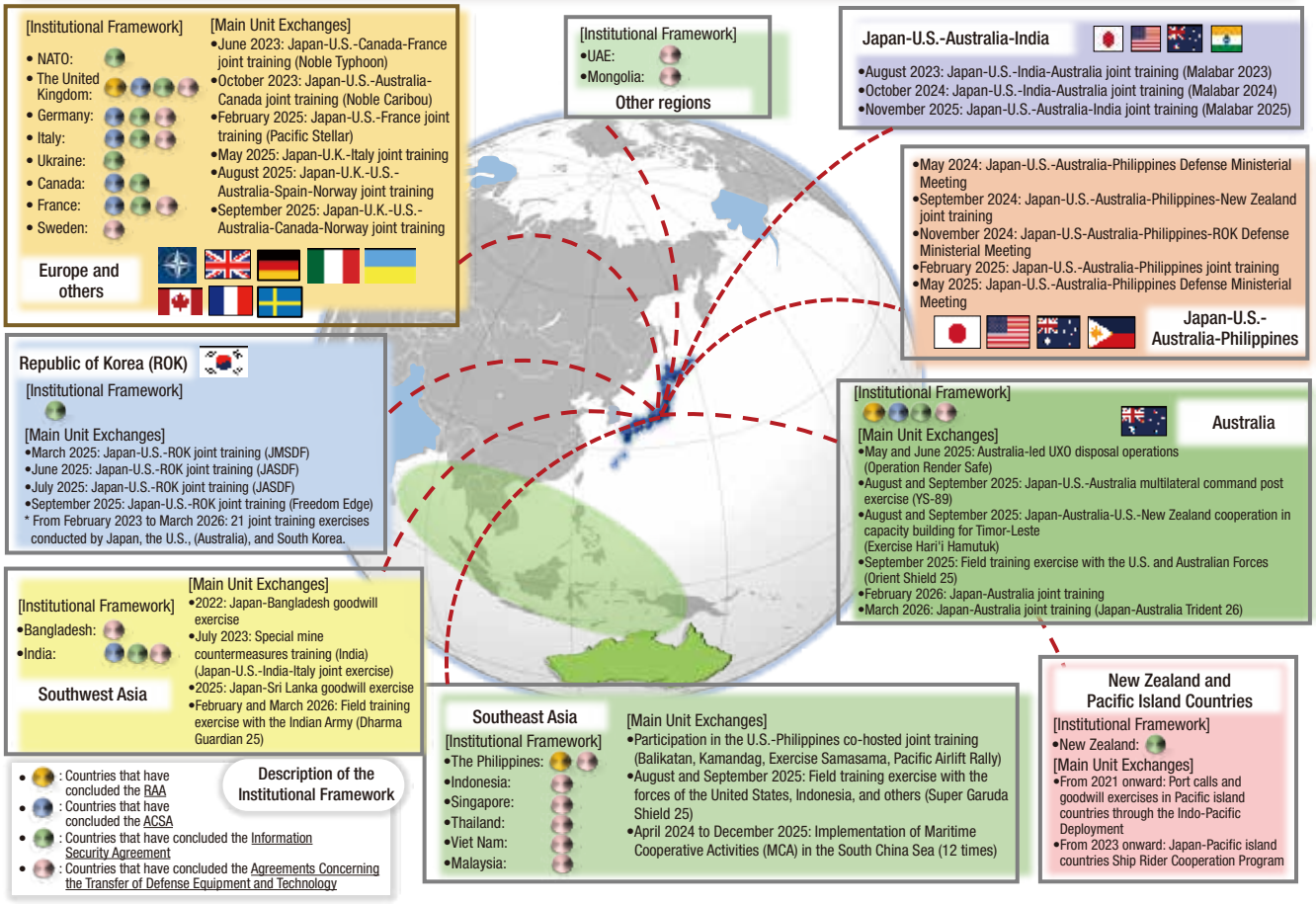


Fig. III-3-1-3 Defense Cooperation and Exchanges (Defense Cooperation and Exchange Tools)

Defense cooperation and exchanges

"Defense cooperation and exchanges" refers to efforts to strengthen bilateral and multilateral defense relations by using various tools, which are significant initiatives for securing the peace and stability of Japan and the international community.

Purpose of defense cooperation and exchanges

- ○ To create a security environment desirable for Japan
- ○ To deter threats from reaching Japan by making opponents realize that doing harm to Japan would be difficult and consequential
- ○ To prevent contingencies through promoting confidence-building and mutual understanding

Tools for defense cooperation and exchanges

Tool ① Cooperation and exchanges among people

… On such occasions as "2+2" Meetings, defense ministerial meetings, chief of staff-level meetings or other high-level meetings, working-level consultations among defense authorities, and multilateral international conferences, participants frankly exchange views on defense policies, regional affairs, defense cooperation and exchanges, etc., thereby developing mutual understanding and confidence-building among them and further promoting defense cooperation and exchanges thereafter. Exchanges of students and interchange in education and research aim to facilitate understanding of defense policies and statuses of military units of other countries and promote relations of trust through network building.





Japan-Australia "2+2" Meeting



Land Forces Summit



First Sea Lord's Sea Power Conference



Air Force Forum in Japan (AFFJ)

Tool ② Cooperation and exchanges among assets

… Through goodwill exercise, mutual visits of naval ships and aircraft (calling at ports and airports), exchange events among units, and other measures, mutual trust with partner countries is developed and cooperative relationships are promoted. In joint training and exercises, the JSDF will enhance the skills of each unit and strengthen nation-to-nation defense relationships through by increasing collaborative capacity with foreign military assets.



Japan-U.S.-ROK Joint Exercise "Freedom Edge 25"



Multinational Airborne Exercise "Mangusta 25"



Joint exercise conducted in conjunction with CSG25 visit



"Atlantic Eagles" North America and Europe Goodwill Visit



Tool ③ Capacity building

… Capacity building aims to improve the capabilities of partner countries in a concrete and steady manner over a certain period of time, and help their military forces play roles in contributing to international peace and regional stability. It is conducted through activities such as seminars and practical training in various fields, the provision of technical guidance, opinion exchanges, and the observation of education and training programs, etc.





Military band training for Djibouti



HA/DR for Philippines



ASEAN, Pacific Island Countries Ship Rider Cooperation Program



Aviation meteorology for Viet Nam

Tool ④ Defense equipment and technology cooperation

… Through overseas transfers of equipment, joint research and development, participation in international exhibitions, and holding of the Defence Industry Forum, Japan seeks to maintain and strengthen its industrial base, enhance capacity of both the JSDF and military forces of partner countries, and strengthen and maintain defense cooperation with those partner countries.



Additional provision of vehicles to Ukraine



INDO PACIFIC 2025 international defense exhibition



DSA 2026



Singapore Airshow 2026



(Reference) Conclusion of agreements regarding defense cooperation

… Through concluding such agreements as Reciprocal Access Agreements, Agreements concerning Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreements, General Security of Information Agreement (GSOIA), the framework of cooperation has been materialized and institutionalized with the aim of promoting defense cooperation and exchanges more smoothly and consistently.



Application of the Japan-Philippines RAA (transportation of relief supplies during disasters)



Signing of the Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of Canada concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology



Signing of the Japan-New Zealand Information Security Agreement (Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)



Signing of the Japan-Netherlands ACSA

Fig. III-3-1-4 Number of High-level Bilateral Dialogues and Consultations (April 2025-March 2026)

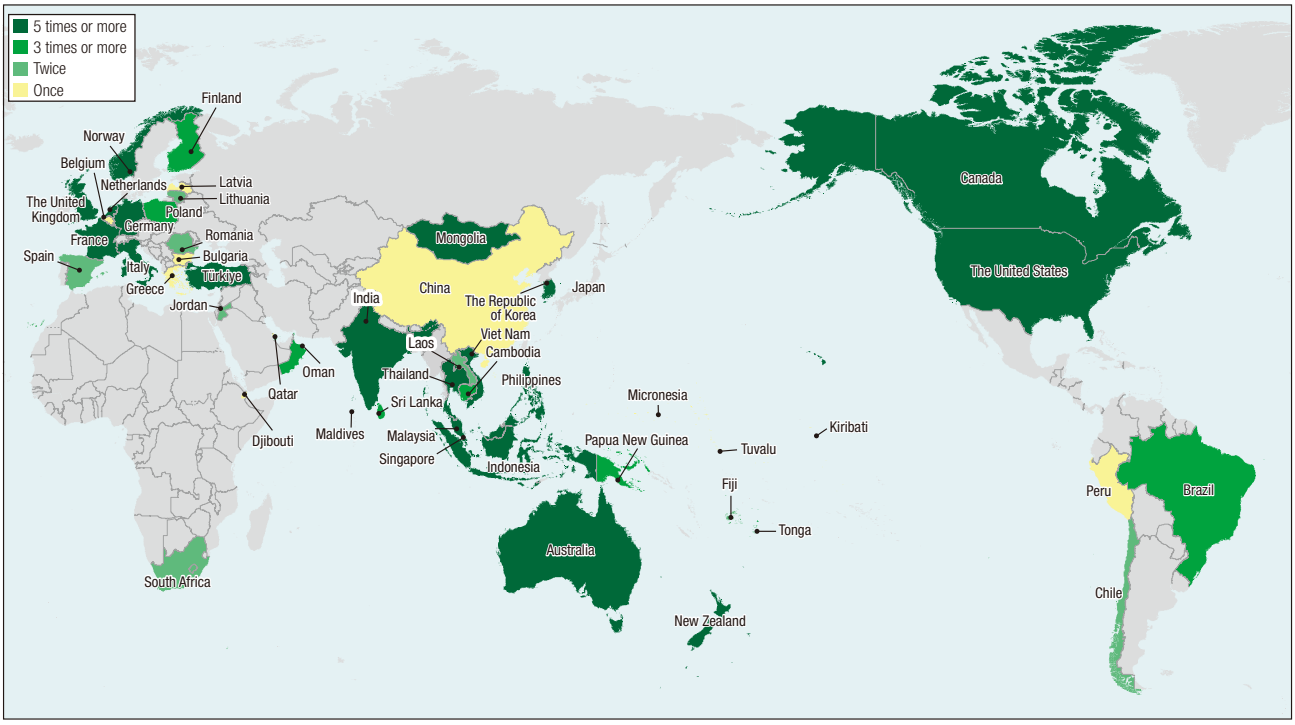
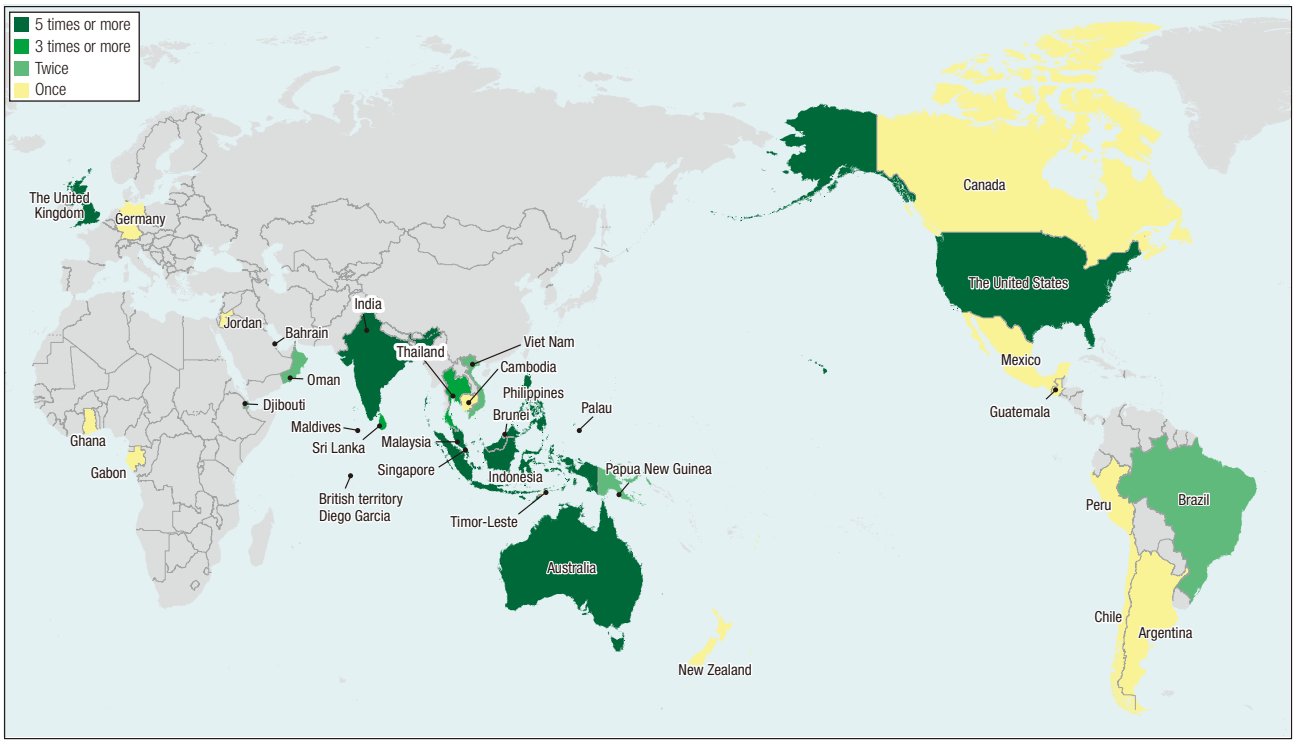


Fig. III-3-1-5 Visit to Ports and Airports by JSDF (April 2025-March 2026)



2 Efforts Contributing to Realization of the FOIP

(1) Characteristics of the Indo-Pacific Region

A free and open maritime order, which relies on the rule of law, is the foundation for the stability and prosperity of the international community. The Indo-Pacific region is at the core of the world's vitality, and home to half the world's population. It is important to establish this region as a free and open global commons to ensure the peace and prosperity of the entire region.

On the other hand, a range of challenges exist for realizing FOIP in the region, including in Japan's vicinity, such as a rapid modernization of military forces and intensified military activities.

(2) Direction of the MOD's Initiatives

Given this situation, the MOD/JSDF is, for example, promoting defense cooperation and exchanges to ensure that Japan can continue stable use of major sea lines of communication. In addition, the MOD/JSDF is promoting mutual understanding and confidence building with countries that modernize their military forces and intensify their military activities to prevent contingencies and ensure Japan's security. Furthermore, for countries in the region that are taking steps to respond to changes in the environment, the MOD/JSDF is trying to contribute to regional peace and stability by supporting their efforts through defense cooperation and exchanges.

(3) Expansion of FOIP: Proposal of OCEAN

With the Japan-U.S. Alliance as its cornerstone, Japan's policy is to further deepen cooperation with like-minded countries and further promote efforts toward realizing FOIP through frameworks, including Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad) partnership. With respect to Southeast Asia, South Asia, Pacific Island countries, the Middle East, Africa and Latin American countries, cooperation will be strengthened to realize FOIP while utilizing wide-ranging means.

The MOD/JSDF is also promoting defense cooperation and exchanges to realize FOIP and is working to maintain the stable use of sea lines of communication by establishing good relations with coastal countries in the aforementioned regions and ensuring that the JSDF has stable access to their ports and airports. The MOD/JSDF is also promoting initiatives, such as joint training and capacity building, to enable these countries to play a more effective role for the stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

Moreover, in the Shangri-La Dialogue held in May 2025, then Defense Minister Nakatani proposed the spirit of One Cooperative Effort Among Nations [OCEAN]: Perspective for the Indo-Pacific, and underscored the importance of countries' defense authorities sharing common values and interests to take a broad and panoramic view of the Indo-Pacific, to generate synergy through enhanced cooperation and collaboration among their respective initiatives, and to create new values and benefits.



Then Defense Minister Nakatani proposing the spirit of OCEAN in the Shangri-La Dialogue

Furthermore, the United States, which is the ally of Japan, Australia, India, European countries such as the United Kingdom, France and Germany, Canada and New Zealand are countries that not only share fundamental values with Japan but also have geographic and historical ties to the Indo-Pacific region. The MOD/JSDF has been encouraging these countries to engage more in the Indo-Pacific region and promoting defense cooperation and exchanges so as to become more effective than through unilateral efforts by Japan.

(4) Promotion of Mutual Understanding and Confidence-Building

With regard to China, the MOD/JSDF will, through defense exchange opportunities, continue to encourage to comply with international norms of conduct and assume a responsible and constructive role for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. In doing so, by frankly conveying its concerns about the increased military activities and military expansions around it, Japan will promote mutual understanding and confidence-building and avoid unforeseen circumstances, thereby ensuring its security.

As for Russia, while condemning its aggression against Ukraine to the maximum extent possible, based on the belief that unilateral changes to the status quo by force are unacceptable, Japan has been keeping in touch with Russia as necessary to avoid unforeseen circumstances and unnecessary friction alongside it.

2 Promotion of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Various Countries

In promoting security cooperation and exchanges, it is important to enhance bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation and exchanges using optimal combinations of various cooperative means, while taking matters such as regional affairs, the situations of partner countries and their relationships with Japan into account.

1 Australia

(1) Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Australia

For Japan, Australia is a special strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific region as both Japan and Australia are allied with the United States and share not only fundamental values but also security strategic interests.

So far, the foundations for cooperation have been formed, including the Japan-Australia ACSA, the Japan-Australia Agreement on the Security of Information, the Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of Australia concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology and the Japan-Australia RAA. In addition, based on the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation (JDSC),[1] the NDS states that the two countries will further deepen their defense cooperation and build a the closest cooperative relationship second only to the Japan-U.S. defense cooperation. Moreover, there is the Framework for Strategic Defence Coordination[2] (FSDC) enabling greater consultation on defense cooperation in each area with a view to ensure effective collaboration at all levels and in all situations from peacetime to contingencies.

The two countries have been consulting about effective collaboration between the JSDF and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in all situations from peacetime to contingencies and improving interoperability through Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) cooperation, asset protection for the ADF, and bilateral and multilateral trainings. They also promote cooperation in areas including capacity building in third countries, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR), defense equipment and technology cooperation.

See Part II, Chapter 4, 3-9 (Asset Protection for the U.S. Forces and Other Forces); Reference 25 (International Student Acceptance Record (Number of Newly Accepted Students in FY2025))

(2) Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025	
	June	Defense Ministerial Meeting
	June	Japan-Australia-the Republic of Korea (ROK) Trilateral Director-General Level Meeting
	September	Twelfth Japan–Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations
	November	Defense Ministerial Meeting
	December	Defense Ministerial Meeting
		Vice Ministers' Meeting
	2026	
	February	Defense Ministerial Meeting (Munich Conference)
	March	Defense Ministerial Video Conference
	April	Defense Ministerial Meeting (Tokyo)
		Defense Ministerial Meeting (Melbourne)
	May	Japan-Australia-New Zealand Defense Ministerial Meeting (Shangri-La Dialogue)
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025	
	May	Bilateral talks with the Chief of Army in the Land Force Pacific Symposium and Exposition (LANPAC) (JGSDF)
	July	Japan-U.S.-Australia-Philippines Quadrilateral talks in Talisman Sabre 25 (JGSDF)
	September	Bilateral talks with the Chief of Army at the Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference (IPACC) (JGSDF)
		Talks with the Chief of Navy (JMSDF)
	November	Indo-Pacific Sea Power Conference 2025 (JMSDF)
		Bilateral exchanges with the Chief of Navy (JMSDF)
	November	Meeting with the Chief of Air Force (JMSDF)
	December	Japan-U.S.-Australia-Philippines quadrilateral talks and bilateral talks with the Chief of Army in the Land Forces Summit/Land Forces Dialogue (LFS/LFD) (JGSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025	
	June	Australian vessel HMAS Sydney port call at a Japanese port (JMSDF)
	August	Japan-Australia-New Zealand Trilateral Exercise (JMSDF)
	September	Australian vessel HMAS Brisbane port call at a Japanese port (JMSDF)
		Mutual dispatch of liaison officers between Japan's Joint Staff and Australia's HQJOC
	November	Japan-Australia-Canada-New Zealand Multilateral Exercise (JMSDF)
		Others
		Protection of weapons and other equipment for Australian Defence Force units
		Deepening of ISR cooperation

1 Signed in October 2022. This Agreement reaffirms the Special Strategic Partnership between Japan and Australia and states that Japan and Australia, as well as Japan, the United States, and Australia, will strengthen cooperation at all levels in order to maintain rules-based order and peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific, specifying the strengthening of defense cooperation in fields such as enhanced interoperability between the JSDF and the Australian Armed Forces, cooperation in ISR, HA/DR, capacity building for regional partners, advanced defense science and technology, and cyber/space. It also states that response measures will be mutually considered in the event of an emergency situation that may affect the security interests of both Japan and Australia or the surrounding region.

2 This consultative body was established to facilitate the alignment of objectives related to the policies and operations of the JSDF, the Australian Defence Force, and the U.S. Forces during peacetime or in emergencies.

Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation	2025 August	Australia selects the upgraded Japanese Mogami-class frigate as its general purpose frigate
	2026 April	Announcements the finalization of contracts for the first three Australian general purpose frigates based on the Upgraded Japanese Mogami-class frigate Others Under the Japan-Australia Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation Projects (RDT&E) Arrangement, Japan-Australia Joint Research on a Robotic and Autonomous System for Undersea Warfare is ongoing.

In June 2025, then Defense Minister Nakatani met with Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Marles in Singapore, and they shared the view that the Japan-Australia relationship is more strategically aligned than ever before, and continue to enhance bilateral defense cooperation in every area, including operational cooperation and joint trainings, and defense equipment and technology.

In September 2025, in Tokyo, then Defense Minister Nakatani and then Foreign Minister Iwaya, together with Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Marles and Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Wong, held the Twelfth Japan-Australia "2+2" Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations. The two countries confirmed the progress in their security and defense cooperation, welcomed Australia's selection of the upgraded Japanese Mogami-class frigate as Australia's general purpose frigate, and confirmed that the two countries would cooperate closely going forward.

In addition, then Defense Minister Nakatani and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Marles held a Japan-Australia Defense Ministerial Meeting and observed the Mogami-class frigate Mikuma.

In October of the same year, Prime Minister Takaichi held a Japan-Australia Summit Meeting with Australian Prime Minister Albanese. The two leaders exchanged views on the security environment and strategic challenges in the Indo-Pacific region, including the situation in East Asia, and concurred on strengthening cooperation. Furthermore, in May 2026, the two Prime Ministers held a Japan-Australia Summit Meeting in Canberra and issued documents including a "Leaders' Statement on "Enhanced Defence and Security Cooperation.

Defense Minister Koizumi also held Japan-Australia Defense Ministerial Meetings with Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Marles in Kuala Lumpur in November 2025, in Tokyo in December 2025, and in Munich in February 2026. At the Defense Ministerial Meeting in Tokyo, the ministers issued the Japan-Australia Defense Ministers' Joint Statement, recognized the important role that Japan and Australia play in upholding regional peace and stability, and therefore announced the establishment of the FSDC. Furthermore, in April 2026, Japan-Australia Defense Ministerial Meetings were held under the FSDC in Tokyo and Melbourne, respectively. In Melbourne, the ministers also attended a ceremony aboard the MSDF destroyer Kumano commemorating the conclusion of the contract of Australia's general purpose frigate and the signing of documents between the relevant authorities. They further signed the "Mogami Memorandum," which included a their commitment to continuing working closely together through coordinated public- and private-sector efforts on the Australia's general purpose frigate program.

In December 2025, Administrative Vice-Minister of Defense Yamato held a Japan-Australia Vice Ministers' Meeting with Secretary of the Department of Defence Australia, Moriarty in Tokyo. In addition to exchanging views on regional situations, the two officials discussed cooperation in a wide range of fields, based on the establishment of the FSDC.

See Section 2 (Training and Exercises with Like-Minded Countries); Part IV, Chapter 3, Section 3-1-1 (Australia); Reference 43 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Australia (FY2022 and Beyond))

(3) Cooperative Relationship, etc., among Japan, Australia, and the United States

To ensure greater effectiveness of cooperation between Japan and Australia and to contribute to the peace and stability of the region, it is important for both countries and their common ally, the United States, to proactively promote the trilateral cooperation.

Building a multi-layered network of allies and like-minded countries and strengthening deterrence with the Japan-U.S. Alliance as the cornerstone is a pillar of Japan's National Security Strategy, and Japan, the United States, and Australia are positioned as the core of this cooperation with allies and like-minded countries. Since 2024, the Japan-U.S.-Australia Trilateral Defense Consultations (TDC)[3] have been established to build a posture under which the Self-Defense Forces, the Australian Defence Force, and the U.S. Forces can effectively cooperate in from peacetime to contingencies.

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 May	Japan-U.S.-Australia Defense Ministerial Meeting Japan-U.S.-Australia-Philippines Defense Ministerial Meeting
	November	Japan-U.S.-Australia-Philippines Defense Ministerial Meeting

3 The purpose of this mechanism is to enable the JSDF, the U.S. Armed Forces and the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) to collaborate effectively in all situations and at all levels, from peacetime to contingency, through measures such as providing direction with regular ministerial meetings, following-up with working-level meetings between the policy and operational sides, and conducting Table Top Exercises on responses to regional contingencies

Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025	
	May	Talks with top officers of the U.S. and Australian land forces in the Land Forces Dialogue (LFD) (JGSDF)
		Talks with the U.S. Army Pacific commander and U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific commander in the Senior Leaders Seminar (SLS) (JGSDF)
		Participation Japan-U.S.-Australia-Philippines panel discussion, and talks with the chief of staff-level officers of each country in the Land Force Pacific Symposium and Exposition (LANPAC) (JGSDF)
	July	Talks with top officers of the land forces of each country, including the United States, Australia, and the Philippines
	December	Quadrilateral talks with Japan-U.S.-Australia-Philippines chief of staff-level officers in the LFS (JGSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025	
	March	Blue Spectrum 25 (JMSDF)
	May to June	Field Training Exercise with U.S. and Australian Forces (Southern Jackaroo 25) (JGSDF)
	August to September	Japan-U.S.-Australia Trilateral Command Post Exercise (YS-89) (JGSDF)
	September	Field Training Exercise with the U.S. and Australian Forces (Orient Shield 2025) (JGSDF)
	September to October	Bushido Guardian 25 (JMSDF)
	August to September	Multilateral Exercise Pacific Vanguard 25 hosted by the U.S. Forces (JMSDF)
	November	Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Multilateral Exercise (Malabar) (JMSDF)
	December	Pacific Shield 25 (Joint forces)
Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation	2026	
	March	Signing of a project arrangement for the Japan-U.S.-Australia Cooperative Research Pertaining to Virtual Structural Testing for Composite Aircraft (Damage-Propagation Analysis Technologies for Aircraft Composite Materials) the first Japan-U.S.-Australia cooperative research based on the Japan-Australia-United States trilateral RDT&E Arrangementt[4]

In May 2025, then Defense Minister Nakatani held the first ministerial meeting since the establishment of the TDC with U.S. Secretary of War Hegseth and Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Marles in Singapore. The three ministers acknowledged the remarkable progress made in their cooperation, and decided to deepen their practical cooperation in a variety of fields, including strategic alignment and operational cooperation, defense advanced capabilities and industrial resilience, and cooperation with regional partners.

Japan, the United States and Australia have continued to engage in cooperation among each force, including the Japan-U.S.-Australia trilateral exercises as well as multilateral joint exercises involving other countries. In July 2025, three countries signed 'Trilateral Navy Logistics TOR' in order to promote logistics cooperation.

Furthermore, in May 2026, Japan, the United States, and Australia made a consensus on future operation of a framework for information sharing in relation to response to missile threats under the name TRISHIP (Trilateral Air/Surface/Missile Information Sharing in the Indo-Pacific). Also, in May 2026, the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) signed a project arrangement for the Japan-U.S.-Australia Cooperative Research Pertaining to Virtual Structural Testing for Composite Aircraft (Damage-Propagation Analysis Technologies for Aircraft Composite Materials).

In December 2025, Japan, the United States, Australia, and India conducted the Quad Indo-Pacific Logistics Network field training exercise in Guam. The purpose of this exercise was for Japan, the United States, Australia, and India to aim for swift and effective assistance to natural disasters in the Indo-Pacific region through transportation cooperation, and personnel from the four countries boarded an Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) C-130H transport aircraft and identified response to natural disasters with the aim of concretizing cooperation.

See Section 2 (Training and Exercises with Like-Minded Countries); Reference 54 (Recent Multilateral High-Level Exchanges (FY2022 and Beyond)); Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

2 India

(1) Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with India

India is increasing its influence with its population (the world's largest), its high economic growth and its latent economic power. Located in the center of sea lines of communication that connect Japan with the Middle East and Africa, India is an extremely important country for Japan.

Japan and India share fundamental values as well as common interests in the peace, stability and prosperity of the Indo-pacific region and the world and have established the Special Strategic and Global Partnership. In this context, Japan and India have promoted cooperation in maritime security and various other areas, while utilizing some frameworks including the "2+2" meeting.

Regarding India, the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between Japan and India was revised in August 2025. In addition to further strengthening existing security and defense cooperation, the revised declaration clearly stated the guidelines for specific security cooperation between Japan and India going forward, including in new fields

REFERENCE: Joint Readout of the Meeting of Defense Ministers From Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States

URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/anpo/2025/1101b_usa_aus_phl-j.html

4 This technology is used to simulate how damage in the form of cracks and peeling that occur inside composite materials can spread and cause destruction when a load is applied. This analysis is crucial for achieving the highly precise evaluation of the strength and other characteristics of composite materials.

such as defense equipment and technology and economic security. Moreover, Japan and India have concluded the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology, the Japan-India General Security of Military Information Agreement and the Japan-India ACSA. These agreements have strengthened the relationship between the two partners, which are capable of dealing with regional and global issues, as well as the foundation of this partnership.

(2) Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025	
	May	Defense Ministerial Meeting
	August	Revision of the Japan-India Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025	
	July	Talks with the Chief of Naval Staff (JMSDF)
	September	Meeting with the Chief of the Air Staff, Indian Air Force (JMSDF)
	October	Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX)
	December	Meeting with the Chief of Army Staff, Indian Army in the LFS (JGSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025	
	October	Indian vessel INS Sahyadri calls at Japanese ports (JMSDF)
	2026	
	February to March	Field Training Exercise with the Indian Army (Dharma Guardian 25) (JGSDF)
Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation	2024	
	November	Signing of the Memorandum of Implementation (MOI) for equipment transfer of Unified Complex Radio Antenna (UNICORN)[5] from Japan to India, and efforts toward realization of the transfer based on the MOI

In May 2025, then Defense Minister Nakatani held a Japan-India Defense Ministerial Meeting with Defence Minister of India Rajnath Singh, and the ministers concurred on the importance of generating new value and benefits for not only their two countries but the entire region by enhancing the collaboration among defense initiatives led by Japan and India to create large synergies, and they proposed that specific cooperation and collaboration between the Japanese and Indian defense authorities based on Japan India Defense cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region(JIDIP) be materialized with a sense of speed going forward. Furthermore, the two ministers proposed to coordinate toward establishing a meeting framework for coordination and progress management of cooperation and collaboration between Japan and India from a comprehensive and integrated point of view, and to discuss the specific details regarding the expansion and deepening of the joint training conducted between Japan and India, their ongoing collaboration in the area of protecting sea lines of communication, the deepening of bilateral collaboration between Japan and India in Southeast Asia, and other matters.

See Section 2 (Training and Exercises with Like-Minded Countries); Chapter 2, Section 5 (Japan-U.S. Bilateral Training and Exercises); Part IV, Chapter 3, Section 3-1-2 (India); Reference 44 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with India (FY2022 and Beyond)); Reference 54 (Recent Multilateral High-Level Exchanges (FY2022 and Beyond)); Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

3 European Countries

European countries share fundamental values with Japan and play a central role in initiatives to address common challenges to global security, with a primary focus on nontraditional security, such as counter-terrorism and response to ship-to-ship transfers, as well as international peace cooperation activities. As such, recognizing the inseparability of Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security, the development of defense cooperation and exchanges with these countries is important for both Japan and the European countries as it provides a basis for Japan to be actively involved in these challenges.

See Section 2 (Training and Exercises with Like-Minded Countries); Reference 45 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with European Countries (FY2022 and Beyond)); Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

(1) The United Kingdom

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom, being a major power that has influence not only in Europe but also in the rest of the world, has historically maintained close relations with Japan. On the security front, Japan shares the same strategic interests as the United Kingdom, as both countries are important allies of the United States. Given this relationship, it is extremely important for Japan to promote cooperation with the United Kingdom by working together on global issues, such as international peace cooperation activities, counterterrorism, counter-piracy operations and cybersecurity as well as by exchanging information on regional situations. Additionally, in recent years, the United Kingdom has made important contributions to ensuring a rule-based maritime order by dispatching a Carrier Strike Group to the Indo-Pacific region and permanently deploying two patrol vessels to the region to conduct monitoring and surveillance activities against illicit maritime activities, including “ship-to-ship transfers” with North Korean-flagged vessels. Accordingly, it is important for

5 Multiple antennas are consolidated into a single antenna, improving the stealth integration of vessels. The MSDF is using a UNICORN for the Mogami-class destroyer (FFM).

Japan to deepen cooperation between Japan and the United Kingdom to realize FOIP.

The strategic partnership with the United Kingdom has been further facilitated and strengthened through the holding of Japan-U.K. "2+2" meetings, as well as the conclusion of the Agreement on the Security of Information, the Japan-U.K. ACSA, and the Japan-U.K. RAA.

See Part IV, Chapter 3, Section 3-1-3 (The United Kingdom)

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025	
	July	Participation in the Security Officers Meeting and Defense Attachés Meeting by the Administrative Vice-Minister of Defense
	August	Defense Ministers Meeting
		Courtesy Call on Prime Minister Ishiba from U.K. Secretary of State for Defence Healey
		Pacific Future Forum (Keynote Address by the Japanese Defense Minister)
	2026	
	May	Defense Ministers Meeting
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025	
	July	Video Conference with the First Sea Lord of the Royal Navy (JMSDF)
		The Global Air & Space Chiefs' Conference (GASCC) (JMSDF)
		Observation of RIAT25 and meeting with air chiefs (JMSDF)
	August	Meeting with the First Sea Lord of the Royal Navy (JMSDF)
		Bilateral meeting with Chief of the Air Staff, Royal Air Force (JMSDF)
		Japan-U.K.-Norway WPS Event, chief of staff-level talks on WPS, and announcement of joint statement on WPS in the maritime field in conjunction with the CSG25 port call (JMSDF)
	September	Talks with Deputy Chief of the General Staff, British Army (JGSDF)
		Bilateral talks with the Chief of the General Staff, British Army, at the Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference (IPACC) (JGSDF)
		Base visits and troop exchanges in conjunction with the Atlantic Eagles (JMSDF)
	November	Exchange of views between the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Japan and the Chief of Staff, Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) (JGSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025	
	May	Japan-Italy-U.K. Multilateral Exercise (JMSDF)
	August	Japan-U.K.-U.S.-Australia-Spain-Norway Multilateral Exercise (JMSDF)
		Japan-U.K. Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF)
		British vessels HMS Dauntless and HMS Prince of Wales call at Japanese ports (JMSDF)
	September	Japan-U.K. Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF)
	September to October	
		Japan-U.K.-Norway Multilateral Exercise, etc. (JMSDF)
	November	Field Training Exercise with the British Army (Vigilant Isles 25) (JGSDF)
Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation	2025	
	July and November	
		Discussion about the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) for next-generation fighter aircraft in the Japan-U.K.-Italy Trilateral Defense Ministerial Meeting

From August to September 2025, British aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales, HMS Dauntless, a British Navy destroyer belonging to the same carrier strike group, and Royal Norwegian Navy frigate HNoMS Roald Amundsen made ports calls in Japan. Then Defense Minister Nakatani had a meeting with U.K. Secretary of State for Defence Healey in Tokyo. Defense Minister Nakatani welcomed the port call of the U.K. Carrier Strike Group to Japan, as it not only demonstrates further advancement of Japan-U.K. defense cooperation but also demonstrates the United Kingdom's robust commitment to the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

Both ministers welcomed the announcement of the first-ever Joint Statement on cooperation between both defense authorities. Based on that document, they confirmed that they would continue closely working together to elevate their defense cooperation to the next level in broad areas ranging from cooperation among all military services including joint exercises, defense equipment and technology cooperation including the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP),[6] new domains such as space and cyber, as well as on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

(2) France

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with France

France is a major power which has influence not only in Europe and Africa but also worldwide, and it is a special partner with which Japan shares deep historical ties.

Japan and France have continued high-level exchanges such as the Japan-France "2+2" meeting and have concluded the Japan-France Agreement on the Security of Information, the Japan-France Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and the Japan-France ACSA. In addition, the two countries agreed to further accelerate the discussion on measures to improve each other's administrative, policy and legal procedures for joint operations and exercises between the units of both countries on a permanent basis.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025	
	May	Defense Ministerial Meeting
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025	
	May	Bilateral talks with the French Armed Forces in New Caledonia (FANC) Commander in LANPAC (JGSDF)
	December	Combined Space Operations (CSpO) Initiative Principals' Board (JMSDF)
	2026	
	February	Talks between the Chief of Staff, Ground Self-Defense Force and General Pierre Schill, Chief of the French Army (Video Conference) (JGSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025	
	September	Field Exercise with the French Army (Brunet-Takamori 25) (JGSDF)
	October	French vessel Prairial calls at a Japanese port (JMSDF)

6 A project to jointly develop next-generation fighter aircraft surpassing so-called fifth-generation fighter aircraft by 2035 by Japan, the United Kingdom and Italy.

Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation	2024 May	An initiative based on the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Cooperation on Railgun Technologies by the MOD, the French Ministry for the Armed Forces, the Federal Ministry of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany and the French-German Research Institute of Saint-Louis

At the 22ndIISS Asia Security Summit[7] (Shangri-La Dialogue) hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), then Defense Minister Nakatani had a meeting with then French Minister for Armed Forces Lecornu and he stated the importance of cooperation with France, the only EU member state that maintains a constant military presence in the Indo-Pacific region.

(3) Germany

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Germany

Germany is a partner with which Japan shares fundamental values and cooperates in addressing issues in the international community as a member of the G7 and other organizations. Germany is increasing its involvement in the Indo-Pacific region based on the Indo-Pacific Guidelines formulated in 2020 and, since the German naval frigate called on Japan in 2021 to conduct joint training and other activities, Germany has regularly dispatched its ground, maritime and air forces to the region. Japan and Germany have concluded the Japan-Germany Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, the Japan-Germany Agreement on the Security of Information, and the Japan-Germany ACSA. In addition, high-level and other exchanges between the two countries are progressing, such as the Japan-Germany "2+2."

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 July September	Bilateral talks with Germany's Inspector of the Army in Talisman Sabre 25 (JGSDF) Base visits and troop exchanges in conjunction with the Atlantic Eagles (JMSDF) Bilateral meeting in response to an official invitation from the German Inspector of the Air Force (JMSDF)

(4) Italy

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Italy

Italy and Japan are G7 member countries and Italy is a strategic partner that shares fundamental values with Japan. The two countries have been promoting institutional development for facilitating defense cooperation, including concluding the Japan-Italy Agreement on the Security of Information and the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, as well as the signing of the Japan-Italy Memorandum on Defence Cooperation and Exchanges and the entry into force of the Japan-Italy ACSA in September 2025.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 December	Defense Ministers Video Teleconference
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 May November	AeroSpace Power Conference 2025 (ASPC25) (JMSDF) Official visit to Italy by the Chief of Staff, Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 April November	Japan-Italy Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF) Multilateral Airborne Exercise hosted by the Italian Army (Mangusta 25) (JGSDF) Italian vessel Marceglia calls at a Japanese port (JMSDF)
Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation	2025 July and November	Discussion about the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) for next-generation fighter aircraft in the Japan-U.K.-Italy Trilateral Defense Ministerial Meeting
Others	[ACSA] September 2025 Entry into force	

In addition to the discussions about the GCAP for next-generation fighter aircraft in the Japan-UK-Italy Trilateral Defense Ministerial Meetings held in July and November 2025, in December of the same year, Defense Minister Koizumi held a Defense Ministerial Video Teleconference with Guido Crosetto, Minister of Defence of the Italian Republic, and they expressed their resolve to deepen the relationship of Japan and Italy, countries which share fundamental values. Furthermore, they confirmed that they were willing to further promote Japan-Italy defense cooperation, including joint training and defense equipment and technology cooperation. Moreover, the two ministers exchanged views on the regional situation, and Defense Minister Koizumi explained the radar illumination incident by Chinese aircraft against JSDF aircraft in December and the joint flight by Chinese and Russian bombers in the same month and shared grave concerns with his counterparts.

(5) Netherlands

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Netherlands

The Netherlands has a historical relationship with Japan that is over 400 years old and is a strategic partner that shares fundamental values with Japan. Based on the Japan-Netherlands Memorandum on Defence Cooperation and Exchanges signed in 2016, the two countries have agreed to further strengthen relations between defense authorities. Note

7 This is a multilateral conference sponsored by IISS, a private U.K. think tank, in which defense ministers from various countries participate with the objective of discussing defense-related issues and regional defense cooperation. It has been held in Singapore every year since 2002 and is known as the Shangri-La Dialogue, named after the hotel where it takes place.

that the Netherlands has been strengthening its engagement in the Indo-Pacific Region in recent years, for example, it formulated the Indo-Pacific Guidelines in 2020 and a Royal Netherlands Navy frigate made port calls in Japan together with a U.K. carrier strike group in 2021.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 October Official Invitation to the Commander of the Royal Netherlands Army (JGSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2026 March to April Kazaguruma Guardian (JMSDF)
Others	[ACSA] December 2025 Signing

In October 2025, General Arai, Chief of Staff, Ground Self-Defense Force made an official invitation to Lieutenant General Jan Swillens, the Commander of the Royal Netherlands Army, and the Commander of the Royal Netherlands Army visited Japan for the first time in 20 years. In their talks, they shared their perceptions of the strategic environment, and exchanged candid views on the future direction of Japan-Netherlands land forces cooperation.

(6) Spain

Spain is a strategic partner that shares fundamental values with Japan, and the two countries signed the Japan-Spain Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges in 2014.

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 November 6th Military to Military Dialogue
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 July Japan-Spain Bilateral Exercise Spanish vessel Méndez Núñez calls at Japanese ports (JMSDF)

During the 6th Japan-Spain Military to Military Dialogue held in Tokyo in November 2025, they exchanged views on the regional affairs and defense policies of both countries.

(7) NATO

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a partner that shares fundamental values and responsibility for global security challenges with Japan.

The "NATO Strategic Concept" adopted in June 2022 stated that the Indo-Pacific region was an important region for NATO which could have a direct impact on the security of the Euro-Atlantic region and that dialogue and cooperation with Indo-Pacific partners such as Japan, Australia, New Zealand and the ROK should be strengthened.

Following the twice revision of the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) between Japan and NATO[8] formulated in 2014, in light of the current international security environment and with a view to further promoting practical cooperation between Japan and NATO in a wide range of areas, such as information warfare including cyber and disinformation countermeasures, and maritime security, in July 2023, the two sides agreed on the new cooperation document, the Japan-NATO Individually Tailored Partnership Programme[9] (ITPP). Japan and NATO share the recognition on the need to further deepen cooperation based on ITPP in future.

The MOD/JSDF dispatches a female JSDF personnel to NATO Headquarters as part of the cooperation in the field of WPS, and MOD personnel participates in the annual meeting of the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (NCGP) every year based on the ITPP.

Currently, JSDF personnel are dispatched as policy staffers to the NATO Headquarters International Military Staff, Cooperative Security Division (NHQIMSCS), where they are involved in coordination operations for cooperation projects with NATO and partner countries.

Furthermore, the MOD sends liaison officers to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and a liaison officer to the NATO Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM).[10] On the occasion of the NATO Summit in June 2025, the Defense Equipment and Industrial Dialogue between Japan and NATO was launched to further strengthen defense industrial cooperation between Japan and NATO. In October 2025, in the first dialogue, the focus was placed on priority issues in the defense industry currently, for example, unmanned aircraft systems (UASs), counter-UAS, science and technology, innovation, standardization, and supply chain security.

See Part I, Chapter 3, Section 9-2-1 (NATO)

8 The IPCP stipulates the promotion of cooperation, such as enhancing high-level dialogue and promoting defense cooperation and exchanges, with the aim of further developing cooperation between Japan and NATO and specifies priority areas for working level cooperation. The IPCP was revised in June 2020, adding "human security" as a priority area for working level cooperation.

9 A new framework cooperation document between Japan and NATO designed to take NATO-Japan cooperation to new heights to respond to the challenges of a new era, covering the four-year period from 2023 to 2026.

10 JSDF personnel have been dispatched to the NATO Headquarters International Military Staff, Cooperative Security Division (NHQIMSCS) since 2021 within the IPCP framework. The Defense Attaché at the Embassy in Belgium (Mission of Japan to NATO from January 2025) has been dispatched to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) since 2017 to hold a concurrent post as part of Japan-NATO defense cooperation. The Defense Attaché at the Embassy in the United Kingdom has been dispatched to the NATO Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM) since 2019 to hold a concurrent post within the revised IPCP framework.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 December	Video Teleconference between Defense Minister Koizumi and NATO Secretary General Rutte
	2026 January	Meeting between Defense Minister Koizumi and NATO Secretary General Rutte (Davos Meeting)
		Japan-NATO High-Level Consultations
	February	Meeting between Defense Minister Koizumi and NATO Secretary General Rutte (Munich Security Conference)
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 May	Participation in the NATO Space Operations Commanders' Conference (JMSDF)
	September	Visit to Japan by Chair of Military Committee of NATO Courtesy Call to Defense Minister and meeting with the Chief of Joint Staff
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 May	Official participation for the fifth time in cyber defense exercise "Locked Shields 2025"
Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation	2025 October	1st Japan-NATO Defense Equipment and Industrial Dialogue

In December 2025, Defense Minister Koizumi and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte held a video teleconference. Defense Minister Koizumi conveyed that cooperation between Japan and NATO as well as between NATO and IP4 (Indo-Pacific Four: Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the ROK) is strategically important as security in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions has become inseparable, and then he stated that he wanted to further strengthen Japan-NATO cooperation.

Furthermore, in both January and February 2026, Defense Minister Koizumi and Secretary General Rutte held meetings, and confirmed that they would further promote a cooperative relationship in a close communicative manner for the strengthening of Japan-NATO cooperation.

(8) EU

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with the EU

Japan shares fundamental values such as freedom, democracy and the rule of law with the European Union (EU). Since the provisional application of the Japan-EU Strategic Partnership Agreement began in 2019, Japan and the EU have been steadily expanding cooperation in the fields of security and defense. The EU has been strengthening its engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, such as with the announcement of the Joint Communication on the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific in 2021, as well as the Strategic Compass in March 2022 that includes a policy of increasing the frequency of naval exercises and port calls and patrols with partner countries, and the announcement of the Japan-EU Security and Defence Partnership in November 2024. Amidst this, the MOD/JSDF is positively and proactively advancing cooperation to ensure that the EU's commitment to the region is irreversible.

See Part I, Chapter 3, Section 9-2-2 (EU)

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 June	1st Japan-EU Security and Defence Dialogue
	July	Meeting between Defense Minister Nakatani and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission
		The 30th Japan-EU Summit
	December	Meeting between Defense Minister Nakatani and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission (Munich Security Conference)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 July	Joint counter-piracy exercise with EU Naval Force (Spanish Navy) (JMSDF)
		Joint exercise with EU Naval Force (Greek Navy) (JMSDF)
	October	Multilateral joint counter-piracy exercise with EU Naval Force, the Djiboutian Navy, and others (DORALEH II) (JMSDF)

In the Japan-EU Security and Defence Partnership announced on the occasion of the 1st Japan-EU Foreign Ministerial Strategic Dialogue in November 2024, a Japan-EU Security and Defence Dialogue at Director-General/Managing Director level was launched in order to further strengthen the development of cooperation in all fields concerning security and defense, as Japan and the EU face an increasing severe security environment. In June 2025, in the first dialogue, both Japan and the EU held discussions to materialize security and defense cooperation in fields such as cyber, disinformation, space, maritime security, WPS, disarmament, and non-proliferation.

In July of the same year, then Defense Minister Nakatani held a meeting with High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission Kallas, who was visiting Japan. Both exchanged their views on regional affairs, and both concurred to further strengthen cooperation against unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion.

In February 2026, Defense Minister Koizumi, who was visiting Germany to attend the Munich Security Conference, held a meeting with High Representative and Vice-President Kallas, and both sides confirmed that they would further deepen Japan-EU defense cooperation and exchanges, and shared the view to closely cooperate in maintaining a rules-based international order and advancing the realization of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

4 ROK

(1) Significance of Japan-ROK Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

The Republic of Korea is an important neighboring country that Japan should cooperate with as a partner in addressing various issues in the international community. In the fields of security and defense, the cooperation between Japan

and the ROK is increasingly important as the security environment surrounding the two countries is becoming severe and complex, including the nuclear and missile issues of North Korea, response to large-scale natural disasters, counterterrorism, counter-piracy and maritime security.

(2) Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025	
	June	Meeting between the Director General, Bureau of Defense Policy and the Deputy Minister for National Defense Policy, Ministry of National Defense, ROK
	August	Defense Ministerial Video Conference
		Summit Meeting
	September	Defense Ministerial Meeting (Seoul Defense Dialogue)
	October	Summit Meeting (APEC Summit Meeting)
	November	Defense Ministerial Meeting (ADMM-Plus)
	December	Defense Ministers Video Teleconference
	2026	
	January	Summit Meeting
		Defense Ministerial Meeting (Japan)
	May	Defense Ministerial Meeting (Shangri-La Dialogue)
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025	
	October	Program hosted by the ROK Air Force (Seoul ADEX) and meeting with Chief of Staff, ROK Air Force (ROKAF) (JMSDF)
	2026	
	January and February	Visit by the ROKAF's Black Eagles to JASDF Naha Air Base, and defense exchange
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025	
	September	Japan-U.S.-ROK Trilateral Exercise Freedom Edge 25 (Joint forces)
	August to September	Multilateral Exercise hosted by the U.S. Forces (Pacific Vanguard 25) (JMSDF)
	2026	
	June	Japan-ROK Search and Rescue Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF)

In September 2025, then Defense Minister Nakatani visited the ROK, the first visit by a defense minister of Japan to the ROK for approximately ten years, with the last such visit taking place in 2015. He held a Defense Ministerial Meeting with Ahn Gyu-Back, Minister of National Defense of the ROK, and the two ministers decided to strengthen communication between the defense authorities of the two countries and agreed to further revitalize regular consultations and human exchanges between their two defense authorities, including reciprocal visits by the two ministers and defense ministerial meetings. Furthermore, the two ministers agreed that, given the rapidly-changing security environment, it was important to stably promote Japan-ROK and Japan-U.S.-ROK security cooperation, and that it was necessary to develop the defense cooperative relationship of their two countries in a future-oriented way. In particular, they decided to explore the possibilities of future-oriented and mutually beneficial cooperation in cutting-edge scientific and technological fields such as AI, unmanned systems, and space.

In November of the same year, Defense Minister Koizumi held his first Defense Ministerial Meeting with Minister of National Defense Ahn Gyu-Back in Malaysia where he was to attend the 12th ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus). The two ministers exchanged views on the regional situation, and they also confirmed that Japan and the ROK, as well as Japan, the United States and the ROK will continue to cooperate closely.

In January 2026, State Minister of Defense Miyazaki welcomed the first visit of the ROKAF's Black Eagles Aerobatic Team to JASDF Naha Air Base. The Black Eagles carried out their first defense exchange with JASDF Blue Impulse, and deepened mutual understanding among the air forces of Japan and the ROK.

In the same month, Defense Minister Koizumi held a Defense Ministerial Meeting in Yokosuka with Minister of National Defense Ahn Gyu-Back, who was visiting Japan. The two ministers concurred that it was important to stably promote Japan-ROK defense cooperation and exchanges, and therefore concurred that they would implement reciprocal visits by the two ministers and defense ministerial meetings every year, and strengthen communication between their defense authorities. Moreover, they confirmed that they would revitalize human exchanges and defense exchanges in order to enhance mutual understanding and trust between the JSDF and the South Korean military. In May 2026, during the Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore, Defense Minister Koizumi held a Japan-ROK Defense Ministerial Meeting with Minister of National Defense Ahn Gyu-Back. The two ministers welcomed the active exchanges taking place between their defense authorities, agreed to maintain this momentum, and reaffirmed their commitment to continuing to promote Japan-ROK and Japan-U.S.-ROK defense cooperation. In June, the Japan MSDF and the ROK Navy conducted a Japan-ROK Search and Rescue Bilateral Exercise for the first time in approximately nine years, with the aim of improving operational proficiency and strengthening cooperation.

See Reference 46 (Recent Japan-ROK Defense Cooperation and Exchanges (FY2022 and Beyond))

(3) Japan-U.S.-ROK Cooperative Relationship

Japan, the United States and ROK, have common interests in peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and it is important for the three countries to work closely together at every opportunity to address various security challenges, including response to North Korea.

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 April	Japan-U.S.-ROK Defense Trilateral Talks
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 July	Japan-U.S.-ROK Chief of Staff Level Videoconference (JMSDF)
		Japan-U.S.-ROK Trilateral Chiefs of Defense (Tri-CHOD) meeting (JJS)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 July	Japan-U.S.-ROK Multilateral Exercise (Joint forces)
	September	Japan-U.S.-ROK Trilateral Exercise Freedom Edge 25 (Joint forces)

In April 2025, the Defense Trilateral Talks (DTT) Working Group and Table Top Exercise (TTX) were held by the defense authorities of Japan, the United States, and the ROK in the ROK Ministry of National Defense. Through these talks, the defense authorities of the three countries promised to continue to maintain the momentum toward security cooperation among them.

In July of the same year, General Yoshida, then Chief of Staff, Joint Staff of Japan, convened the 22nd Japan-U.S.-ROK Tri-CHOD meeting with Admiral Kim Myung-soo, then ROK Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General Dan Caine, U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the three chiefs of defense recognized the importance of close trilateral cooperation in addressing security challenges on the Korean Peninsula, in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. The three chiefs of defense also pledged to continue working together to respond to the North Korea's threats.

See Chapter 2, Section 5 (Japan-U.S. Bilateral Training and Exercises); Reference 54 (Recent Multilateral High-Level Exchanges (FY2022 and Beyond)); Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

5 Canada and New Zealand

Canada and New Zealand share fundamental values with Japan and play a central role in initiatives to address common challenges to global security, with a primary focus on nontraditional security, such as counter-terrorism and response to ship-to-ship transfers, as well as international peace cooperation activities. Promoting defense cooperation and exchanges with these countries provides the foundations for Japan to become actively involved in these challenges and this is important for all of Japan, Canada and New Zealand.

See Section 2 (Training and Exercises with Like-Minded Countries), Reference 47 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Canada and New Zealand (FY2022 and Beyond)), Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

(1) Canada

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Canada

Japan and Canada are G7 members, fellow Pacific nations, and comprehensive strategic partners that share fundamental values. The relationship between Japan-Canada defense authorities has been significantly deepening over the past few years, including through the Joint Statement on defense cooperation in 2019 and the entry into force of the Japan-Canada ACSA.

Canada has been increasing its engagement in the Indo-Pacific region in recent years, including releasing its Indo-Pacific Strategy in November 2022 and increasing the number of navy vessels that it dispatches to the Indo-Pacific region to support FOIP.

See Part I, Chapter 3, Section 9-3-4 (Canada)

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025	
	June	Summit Meeting
	November	Summit Meeting
	2026	
	March	Defense Ministerial Meeting
	May	Japan-Australia-New Zealand Defense Ministerial Meeting (Shangri-La Dialogue)
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025	
	May	Bilateral talks with the Commander of the Canadian Army in LANPAC (JGSDF)
	September	Base visits and troop exchanges in conjunction with the Atlantic Eagles (JMSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025	
	November	Japan-Australia-Canada-New Zealand Multilateral Exercise (JMSDF)
		Canadian vessel HMCS Max Bernays calls at a Japanese port (JMSDF)
Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation	2026	
	January	Signing of the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology
Others	[Agreement on the Security of Information]	
	2025	
	July	Signing of the Agreement on the Security of Information (entry into force in January 2026)

Then Prime Minister Ishiba held a Japan-Canada Summit Meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Carney on the occasion of the G7 Summit held in Kananaskis in June 2025. Furthermore, Prime Minister Takaichi took the opportunities of the APEC Summit Meeting in November of the same year and the visit to Japan by Prime Minister Carney in March 2026 to hold a Japan-Canada summit meeting. At the meeting, the two leaders agreed that Japan and Canada would continue to collaborate closely on the further expansion of joint training and in other areas, taking into account the regional situation, such as the need to respond to North Korea, including its nuclear and missile program, the abductions issue, and other issues, and also taking into account the fact that the legal foundation has been put in place for the Agreement on the Security of Information that entered into force in January 2026, the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology signed the same month, and other such agreements. Furthermore, in this meeting, the leaders agreed to cooperate closely based on the Japan–Canada Leaders' Joint Statement and the Japan-Canada Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

(2) New Zealand

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with New Zealand

New Zealand shares fundamental values with Japan and is an important strategic cooperative partner in the Indo-

Pacific region, where the strategic environment is becoming increasingly severe. The defense authorities of Japan and New Zealand actively conduct high-level exchanges, joint training and unit-to-unit exchanges.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 May Vice Ministers' Meeting Defense Ministerial Meeting (Shangri-La Dialogue) November Defense Ministerial Meeting (ADMM-Plus) Military to Military (MM) Dialogue December Defense Ministerial Meeting 2026 February Defense Ministerial Meeting (Munich Conference) April Defense Ministerial Video Conference May Defense Ministerial Meeting (Shangri-La Dialogue) Japan-Australia-New Zealand Defense Ministerial Meeting (Shangri-La Dialogue)
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 October Talks with the Chief of Royal New Zealand Navy (JMSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 August Japan-Australia-New Zealand Multilateral Exercise (JMSDF) August Japan-New Zealand Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF) August to September Multilateral Exercise hosted by the U.S. Forces (Pacific Vanguard 25) (JMSDF) November Japan-Australia-Canada-New Zealand Multilateral Exercise (JMSDF) December Pacific Shield 25 (Joint forces)
Others	[Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)] 2025 December Signing of the ACSA [Agreement on the Security of Information] 2025 December Signing [Agreement on the Security of Information] (entry into force in March 2026)

In June 2025, in a Defense Ministerial Meeting with then Minister of Defence of New Zealand Collins held on the occasion of the 22nd IISS Asian Security Summit (Shangri-La Dialogue), then Defense Minister Nakatani welcomed the steady strengthening of bilateral cooperation and collaboration such as the implementation of regular high-level exchanges including ministerial meetings, the first bilateral training conducted in 2024, and the collaboration with Pacific Islands Countries. Furthermore, Minister Nakatani stated the importance of improvement in interoperability by continuing mutual dispatches of assets and bilateral trainings that take the opportunities provided by those dispatches.

In November of the same year, on the occasion of ADMM-Plus, Defense Minister Koizumi held a meeting with Minister of Defence Collins, noted New Zealand's intention to replace their Naval frigates, and agreed to remain in close communication going forward.

Moreover, the two ministers held a Defense Ministerial Meeting in Tokyo in December of the same year and shared grave concerns over the radar illumination incident by Chinese military aircraft against JSDF aircraft and the joint flight by Chinese and Russian bombers, which had both occurred that same month, and they concurred to closely communicate with each other.

Furthermore, on the same day as the Defense Ministerial Meeting, the Japan-New Zealand ACSA and Agreement on the Security of Information were signed by Minister for Foreign Affairs Motegi and Minister of Defence Collins.

In February 2026, Defense Minister Koizumi, who was visiting Germany to attend the Munich Security Conference, held a meeting with Minister of Defence Collins, and the two ministers concurred on developing defense equipment cooperation building upon the progress made in bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges. Moreover, based on the recognition that the security of the Indo-Pacific and the Euro-Atlantic is inseparable, the ministers confirmed that as members of the IP4, Japan and New Zealand would work together to promote cooperation with NATO and European countries. In April of the same year, Defense Minister Koizumi held a video conference with Minister of Defence of New Zealand Penk, and they exchanged views on defense cooperation in the future. Furthermore, in May 2026, the first-ever Japan–Australia–New Zealand Trilateral Defence Ministers' Meeting was held in Singapore, where the three ministers confirmed that they would cooperate toward realizing a free and open Indo-Pacific that is inclusive and resilient. Minister Koizumi also welcomed the announcement by the Government of New Zealand that the upgraded Mogami-class frigate had been announced as one of the candidates for the replacement of its Anzac-class frigates.

6 Northern Europe and the Baltic States

(1) Sweden

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Sweden

Japan and Sweden are located east and west of Russia, respectively, share many commonalities in terms of situational awareness and strategic interests, share fundamental values, and are important partners in addressing various challenges facing the international community. December 2022 marked the conclusion of the Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, the first of such agreement with a Nordic country, promoting the defense cooperation and exchanges between the two countries. In addition, as the relationships between NATO and our country have strengthened in recent years, progress in defense cooperation and exchanges with Sweden, which has become a new member of NATO in 2024, is expected. In March 2024, Sweden revised its traditional military non-alignment and became a full member of NATO. Japan supports the membership of Sweden from the perspective that collaboration among like-minded countries has become more important than ever.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 October	Receipt of a visit by the Crown Princess of Sweden to the Joint Staff College Meeting between Minister for Civil Defence Bohlin and the Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs

In October 2025, Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs Kano exchanged views with Swedish Minister for Civil Defence Bohlin regarding a wide range of fields, including bilateral defense cooperation and the initiatives of the two countries based on the security environment.

(2) Denmark

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Denmark

Denmark is a strategic partner that shares fundamental values with Japan and the two countries have accumulated a series of defense exchanges, including high-level talks and research exchanges.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 October	Talks between the Commander, JSDF Joint Operations Command (C-JJOC), and Chief of Joint Operations, Defence Command Denmark (JJS)

In October 2025, General Nagumo, then C-JJOC, held talks with Major General Hellebjerg, Chief of Joint Operations, Defence Command Denmark.

The C-JJOC emphasized that the JSDF will further enhance their deterrence and response capabilities by strengthening their joint operational capabilities, including cross-domain operations, and by strengthening cooperation with allies and like-minded nations. Both participants shared their perceptions regarding the international situation and their respective regional situations, and they exchanged views on further deepening defense cooperation and exchanges between Japan and Denmark going forward, taking into account the situation that Euro-Atlantic security and Indo-Pacific security are becoming increasingly interconnected and the strategic significance of Japan-EU cooperation and Japan-NATO cooperation is expanding.

Furthermore, from April of the same year, a permanent defense attaché was stationed at the Embassy of Denmark in Japan for the first time, facilitating communication between defense authorities through the defense attaché.

(3) Norway

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Norway

Norway is a strategic partner that shares values and principles as well as a long history of friendship with Japan and, in 2023, Japan and Norway announced a strategic partnership. In 2024, the first Japan-Norway Defense Ministers Meeting for approximately 40 years was held, and since then active high-level exchanges have been taking place.

In addition, Japan acquired the Joint Strike Missile (JSM), a stand-off missile to be mounted on F-35A fighter jets, from Norway.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 April August	Visit to Norway by a Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense Meeting by the State Minister of Defense and the State Secretary to Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of Norway Courtesy call to the Defense Minister by the State Secretary to Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of Norway
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 August	Talks with Chief of the Royal Norwegian Navy (JMSDF) Japan-U.K.-Norway WPS Event, chief of staff-level talks on WPS, and announcement of joint statement on WPS in the maritime field in conjunction with the CSG25 port call (JMSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 August September September to October October	First port call to Japan by Norwegian vessel HNoMS Roald Amundsen Japan-U.K.-U.S.-Australia-Spain-Norway Multilateral Exercise (JMSDF) Japan-U.K.-U.S.-Australia-Canada-Norway Multilateral Exercise (JMSDF) Japan-UK-Norway Multilateral Exercise (JMSDF) Japan-UK-India-Norway Multilateral Exercise (JMSDF)

In April 2025, then Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense Kobayashi visited Norway, held meetings with Norwegian State Secretary to Minister of Defence Gerhardsen and General Director of the Norwegian Defence Material Agency (NDMA) Jære, and exchanged views regarding the regional situation and defense cooperation, including the first port call to Japan by a Norwegian vessel in the summer of the same year and JSM procurement.

In August of the same year, then State Minister of Defense Honda held a meeting with State Secretary to Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of Norway Flam, who was visiting Japan, and welcomed the deployment of Norwegian Navy frigate HNoMS Roald Amundsen to the Indo-Pacific region as a part of the U.K. Carrier Strike Group (CSG) and the vessel making port calls to Japan for the first time. At the meeting, a discussion was held on bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges, and the State Minister and State Secretary shared the view to further promote defense cooperation and exchanges in various fields including high-level exchanges, unit-to-unit engagement, defense equipment and technology cooperation, space-related cooperation, and cooperation through NATO.

(4) Finland

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Finland

Finland is a strategic partner that shares fundamental values with Japan and in 2019, Japan signed the Japan-Finland

Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges. In addition, as the relationships between NATO and Japan have been strengthened in recent years, defense cooperation and exchanges with Finland, which became a new member of NATO in 2023, is expected to progress.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 August Visit to Finland by the State Minister of Defense September Visit to Japan by the Director General of the Defence Policy Department
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 May Meeting with the Commander of the Finnish Defence Forces (JJS) Chief of staff-level meeting (JJS)

In May 2025, General Yoshida, then Chief of Staff, Joint Staff of Japan, visited Finland for the first time in approximately seven years as Chief of Joint Staff and held a meeting with General Jaakkola, Commander of the Finnish Defence Forces, and the two participants exchanged views toward the further strengthening of the defense cooperation of their two countries, taking into account changes in the international situation.

In August of the same year, then State Minister of Defense Honda visited Finland and exchanged views with Minister of Defence of Finland Häkkänen regarding the regional situation and bilateral defense cooperation, and the two ministers agreed that they would collaborate toward further strengthening of their bilateral defense cooperation, including defense equipment and technology cooperation. Furthermore, in September of the same year, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of Finland Pulkkinen visited Japan and exchanged views with Vice-Minister of Defense for International Affairs Kano, and they agreed that they would continue to further strengthen the relations of their two countries in a wide range of fields.

(5) Estonia

Estonia is a partner that shares fundamental values with Japan. Estonia is implementing advanced initiatives as one of the world's leading IT countries, and cooperation with the MOD/JSDF is progressing in the field of cyber defense. In addition, Estonia takes an important role in the view of Japan-NATO cooperation, including being the location of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) to which the MOD is dispatching its staff.

Previously, the defense attaché in Finland was concurrently serving in Estonia but a new Defense Attaché has been dispatched since March 2025.

(6) Latvia

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Latvia

Latvia is a partner that shares values and principles with Japan. With growing recognition among like-minded countries that the security of Europe and the Indo-Pacific is inseparable, collaboration toward the realization of FOIP and cooperation through the EU, NATO and others are becoming increasingly important.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 January to April Dispatch of MOD staff to the NATO Strategic Communications Center (STRATCOM COE)

(7) Lithuania

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Lithuania

Lithuania is a strategic partner of Japan and the two countries are deepening their cooperation to uphold and reinforce the free and open international order based on the rule of law. Lithuania formulated its Indo-Pacific Strategic Guidelines in 2023 and its Strategy for Security and Defence Engagement in the Indo-Pacific Region in May 2025. Furthermore, in 2023, the two countries signed the Japan-Lithuania Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchange, and they are promoting defense cooperation and exchanges based on this memorandum.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 May Japan-Lithuania Defense Ministers Meeting June to July Short-term dispatch of one MOD staff member to the Regional Cyber Defense Center (RCDC) located in Lithuania November Japan-Lithuania Military to Military Dialogue

In May 2025, then Defense Minister Nakatani held a Defense Ministers Meeting with then Minister of National Defence Šakalienė, and the two ministers highly valued the development of bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges in various fields including high-level exchanges, cyber cooperation, working level exchanges in information, educational exchanges, and support for Ukraine, and concurred to continue to promote the cooperation and exchanges.

See Reference 45 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with European Countries (FY2022 and Beyond))

7 Central and Eastern European Countries

(1) Ukraine

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Ukraine

Ukraine is a partner that shares fundamental values such as freedom, democracy and the rule of law with Japan.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which began in

February 2022, violates Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, is a serious violation of international law, including the UN Charter prohibiting the use of force, shakes the very foundations of the international order and is absolutely unacceptable. Based on this position, Japan has been taking decisive measures by uniting with the international community.

In June 2024, then Prime Minister Kishida attended a summit meeting in Italy with Ukraine President Zelenskyy during which they signed the Accord on Support for Ukraine and Cooperation between the Government of Japan and Ukraine. Additionally, in November 2024, the Japan-Ukraine Agreement on Security of Information was signed between the Ambassador of Japan to Ukraine and the First Deputy Head of the Security Service of Ukraine in order to expand and promote information sharing with Ukraine, which has unique experience and knowledge in the security and defense fields.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 April, June, July, September, October and December Ukraine Defense Contact Group
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 November to December Participation in the Demining Coalition to support Ukraine (JGSDF)
Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation	Partial revision of the Implementation Guidelines for the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine 2025 October Additional provision of JSDF vehicles
Others	2025 June Entry into force of the Agreement on the Security of Information

Based on the outcome of a Japan-Ukraine Summit Meeting held on the occasion of the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May 2023, in the following month, the MOD/JSDF accepted two injured Ukrainian soldiers with lower leg amputations (below-the-knee amputations) at the JSDF Central Hospital, with the Japanese side bearing the costs in principle. Japan is providing maximum support to Ukraine in close cooperation with the international community. Since March 2025, the MOD/JSDF has expanded this initiative by newly accepting injured soldiers at the National Defense Medical College Hospital and the JSDF Iruma Hospital, and since July of the same year

VOICE

Voice of JSDF Personnel Who Participated in the Educational Training Course of the Demining Coalition to Support Ukraine

Overview of the Activity

The MOD/JSDF dispatched two Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) instructors to an educational training course on humanitarian demining for Ukrainian soldiers, which was jointly conducted by the Republic of Lithuania and the five Nordic countries (Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland) in Lithuania from November 3 to December 5, 2025. This initiative was highly significant, as it contributed to promoting humanitarian assistance for the Ukrainian people who are facing difficulties by helping the Armed Forces of Ukraine to enhance their demining capability. In addition, this effort led to strengthening the relationship between Japan and Lithuania, and the five Nordic countries, which have joined the Demining Coalition. The GSDF personnel who took part in the training reflected on their participation as follows.

Engineer School: Major UMEI Yasumichi, GSDF

Training Ukrainian soldiers alongside instructors from the Nordic countries strongly reaffirmed for me that our efforts will contribute to protecting Ukrainian lives and achieving peace in Ukraine. It was an exceptionally meaningful dispatch that enabled us to interact with Nordic country instructors through multinational training and learn knowledge and skills from one another.

Central Readiness Regiment: Sergeant First Class MUROTA Hisanobu, GSDF

I realized that the knowledge and skills in demining Japan has developed are as good as those of the five Nordic countries. I am very pleased and proud that we were able to demonstrate a strong presence and support the people of Ukraine.



Photo with Ukrainian soldiers
Second from left: Major Umei
Fourth from left: Sergeant First Class Murota
Mosaic masking has been applied to the faces
of the Ukrainian soldiers at the request of the Nordic countries

has further expanded the scope to include not only lower limb amputations, including below-the-knee cases, but also upper limb amputations. As of the end of March 2026, a total of 18 injured soldiers have been accepted, demonstrating Japan's maximum support for Ukraine in close cooperation with the international community.

Since December 2023, the MOD/JSDF has been participating in the Demining Coalition[11] and the IT Coalition[12] to support Ukraine, in which some willing nations such as European countries participated. Concerning the Demining Coalition, from November to December 2025, Japan dispatched two GSDF instructors to an educational training course on humanitarian demining for Ukrainian soldiers that was jointly conducted in Lithuania by that country and the five Nordic countries. Through this educational support, Japan contributed to the promotion of humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian people who are facing difficulties by helping the Armed Forces of Ukraine to enhance their demining capability. Furthermore, in December of the same year, the MOD/JSDF held a workshop to share their knowledge pertaining to cybersecurity in the IT Coalition. Through this educational support, Japan contributed to the enhancement of the IT capabilities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and to the strengthening of relations with the European countries participating in the IT Coalition.

See Part IV, Chapter 3, Section 3-1-6 (Ukraine)

(2) Czech Republic

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is a strategic partner that shares values and principles with Japan. In 2017, the Memorandum on Defence Cooperation and Exchanges was signed between Japan and Czech, becoming the first such Memorandum signed between Central and Eastern European countries with Japan. The NDS also specifies that Japan will strengthen cooperation with Central and Eastern European countries, including the Czech Republic.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 July	Meeting between the Prime Minister and the President of the Czech Republic

In July 2025, then Prime Minister Ishiba held a meeting with President of the Czech Republic Petr Pavel, who was visiting Japan to participate in the National Day Event of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. The Prime Minister stated that Japan wishes to work closely with the Czech Republic both bilaterally and in the international arena, based on the shared recognition that security in Europe and that in the Indo-Pacific are inseparable. The two leaders also exchanged views on regional situations in Ukraine and the Indo-Pacific, such as dealing with North Korea including on the nuclear and missile issues as well as the abductions issue, and concurred to coordinate closely.

(3) Poland

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Poland

Poland is a strategic partner that shares values and principles with Japan. Cooperation with Poland is advancing based on the "Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategic Partnership," including in the areas of politics and security. In 2022, the Memorandum on Defence Cooperation and Exchanges was signed between Japan and Poland. The NDS also specifies that Japan will strengthen cooperation with Central and Eastern European countries, including Poland.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2026 February	State Minister of Defense's Visit to Poland
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2026 January	Participation in New Year Jump in Indo-Pacific 2026 by the Polish Land Forces (JGSDF)

In February 2026, State Minister of Defense Miyazaki visited the Polish Ministry of National Defence and met with Polish Secretary of State Zalewski. They exchanged views on bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges, the regional situation, and support for Ukraine given the current international situation that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific is inseparable, and they concurred to further promote bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges in various fields. Furthermore, State Minister of Defense Miyazaki inspected Ukraine support hubs inside Poland and received a briefing on the efforts of those facilities.

(4) Romania

Romania is a strategic partner of Japan and in response to the increasingly severe security environment, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the two countries are going to consolidate dialogue in the security field.

See Reference 45 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with European Countries (FY2022 and Beyond))

11 A multilateral framework for demining support announced for launch in June 2023 and led by the Republic of Lithuania and Iceland.
12 A multilateral framework for IT support announced for launch in June 2023 and led by the Republic of Estonia, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and Ukraine.

8 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

(1) Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with ASEAN Member States

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries have high potential as the world's "open growth center" with continuous high economic growth, etc. In addition, they are situated in strategically important areas that occupy key points on Japan's sea lines of communication and they play an important role in ensuring peace and prosperity for both Japan and whole of the region.

Given such importance of ASEAN countries, there is great significance in the MOD/JSDF strengthening defense cooperation and exchanges with each ASEAN country while supporting efforts to reinforce ASEAN centrality, unity and resilience as the foundation for regional cooperation from the view of realizing FOIP. This will also lead to the creation of a desirable security environment for Japan.

Based on this principle, Japan is facilitating confidence building and mutual understanding through high-level and working-level exchanges as well as promoting capacity building, bilateral/multilateral training, and defense equipment and technology cooperation with ASEAN countries. In addition to bilateral cooperation, Japan also conducts cooperation within multilateral frameworks such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

See 3 (Promotion of Multilateral Security Cooperation); 4 (Proactive and Strategic Initiatives for Capacity Building); Section 2 (Training and Exercises with Like-Minded Countries); Reference 48 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with ASEAN Member States (FY2022 and Beyond)); Reference 54 (Recent Multilateral High-Level Exchanges (FY2022 and Beyond)); Reference 58 (Vientiane Vision 2.0); Reference 59 (Japan-ASEAN Ministerial Initiative for Enhanced Defense Cooperation (JASMINE)); Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

(2) Indonesia

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Indonesia

Indonesia is a major regional power that exercises leadership in ASEAN and is a comprehensive and strategic partner that shares fundamental values with Japan in principle. Indonesia is located in the Strait of Malacca and other key areas of maritime transportation and, since the Japan-Indonesia Summit in 2015, when the two countries agreed to strengthen the Strategic Partnership underpinned by sea and democracy, they have been actively engaging in defense cooperation and exchanges at various levels and fields, such as holding a Japan-Indonesia "2+2" Foreign and Defense Ministers' Meeting while also concluding Agreements concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology in 2021.

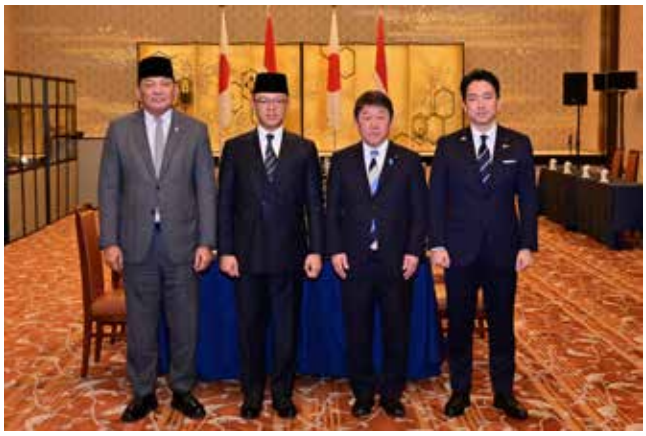
b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025	
	November	Defense Ministerial Meeting (ADMM-Plus) Defense Ministerial Meeting (Tokyo) Third Japan-Indonesia "2+2" meeting
	December	Defense Ministerial Video Teleconference
	2026	
	May	Defense Ministerial Meeting Signing of the Japan-Indonesia Defense Cooperation Arrangement by Japan's Defense Minister and Indonesia's Minister of Defense
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025	
	April	Chief of staff-level meeting (JJS)
	2025	
	May	Bilateral talks with the Chief of Army Staff at LANPAC (JGSDF)
	August	Chiefs of Defense meeting (JJS)
	September	Talks with the Chief of Naval Staff (JMSDF)
	October	Field officer exchange
	2026	
	February	Official Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) Chief of Staff visit Talks involving the Defense Minister and Chief of Naval Staff (JMSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025	
	May	Japan-Indonesia Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF)
	August to September	Field Training Exercise with the Forces of the United States, Indonesia, and others (Exercise Super Garuda Shield 25) (JGSDF) (JMSDF) (JMSDF)
	November	Japan-Indonesia Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF)
Capacity Building	2025	
	June	Japan-ASEAN and Timor-Leste Ship Rider Cooperation Program
	July	Japanese language training (invitational) Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Program Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program
	September to February 2026	Japanese language training (dispatch)
Others	[OSA]	
	2026	
	January	Exchange of Notes signed

At the third Japan-Indonesia "2+2" meeting, which was held in November 2025, the four ministers shared their awareness that the security environment is becoming increasingly severe, and, to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law, they confirmed that they will further strengthen bilateral security and defense cooperation as well as cooperation pertaining to the regional situation and international arena. Since the previous "2+2" meeting, Indonesia has welcomed the progress on cooperation with Japan, including the provision of high-speed patrol boats by Japan to Indonesia under the Official Security Assistance

(OSA) program,[13] and the leaders agreed to continue expanding such cooperation in the maritime security field. In addition, they agreed to advance military-to-military discussions that include defense equipment and technical cooperation based on the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, as well as to start engaging in military-to-military discussions regarding how to protect military information to deepen bilateral cooperation. Furthermore, at the Defense Ministerial Meeting held on the same date, based on a ministerial-level talk by two ministers, an agreement was reached to promptly achieve concrete cooperation between Japan and Indonesia under what is called the "Integrated Defense Dialogue Mechanism" specifically by promptly establishing "Defense Strategy Dialogue" at the vice-ministerial level that will cover equipment and technology cooperation, and other policy concerns as well as a high-level dialogue by the Chief of Staff, Joint Staff of Japan and the Commander of the Indonesian National Armed Forces that will cover operational concerns.

At the Japan-Indonesia Defense Ministerial Video Teleconference held in December 2025, Defense Minister Koizumi explained the radar illumination incident by Chinese aircraft against JSDF aircraft in December as well as the joint flight by Chinese and Russian bombers to Indonesia Defense Minister Sjafrie, expressing his grave concerns, and the two leaders agreed to work together to pursue peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. In May 2026, Defense Minister Koizumi visited Indonesia, where he met with Defence Minister Sjafrie, and the two Ministers signed the Defence Cooperation Arrangement (DCA), which expands the Memorandum of Cooperation and Exchanges in the Field of Defense signed in 2015. During the Defense Ministerial Meeting with Defence Minister Sjafrie, they concurred on the establishment of an "Integrated Defence Dialogue Mechanism" to expand and deepen the defense partnership between the two countries in an integrated and comprehensive manner. Under this mechanism, they also concurred on holding defense strategic dialogues at a vice-ministerial-level and a high-level meeting between the Chief of Staff, Joint Staff and the Commander of the Indonesian National Armed Forces. Furthermore, in light of the Japan's recent revision to its defense equipment transfer framework, they concurred on establishing a working group under their supervision and deepening cooperation in the field of defense equipment and technology to improve maritime deterrence capabilities.



Japan-Indonesia "2+2"

(3) Cambodia

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Cambodia

In 1992, Cambodia became the first country to which Japan sent an JSDF unit for UN PKO (Peacekeeping Operations). As indicated by Japan's capacity building for Cambodia since 2013 and other programs, defense cooperation and exchanges between the two countries have made steady progress.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025	
	May	Bilateral talks with the Army Commander at LANPAC (JGSDF)
	June	Talks between the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and the Army Commander (JGSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025	
	April	Japan-Cambodia Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF)
Capacity Building	2025	
	June	Japan-ASEAN and Timor-Leste Ship Rider Cooperation Program
	July	Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program
		Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Program
	September	PKO civil engineering (invitational)
	2026	
	January to March	PKO civil engineering (dispatch)

(4) Singapore

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Singapore

Singapore was the first Southeast Asian country to sign a Memorandum on Defense Exchanges with Japan in 2009 (revised in 2022). Since then, based on this Memorandum, various cooperative relationships have been progressing steadily, including the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology that took effect in 2023.

13 A new framework for grant assistance established in 2023 in which military forces and others are beneficiaries, for the purpose of strengthening security cooperation with Japan, creating a favorable security environment for Japan and helping maintain and strengthen international peace and security by consolidating the security capabilities and deterrence of the countries of the region by providing equipment and materials, infrastructure development and other activities

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	May	Defense Ministerial Meeting (Shangri-La Dialogue)
	July	Exchange of views between the Senior Advisor to the Defense Minister and the Permanent Secretary (Defence Development)
	August	Exchange of views between the Senior Advisor to the Defense Minister and Senior Minister of State for Defence
	November	Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM-Plus)
	2026	
	March	20th Japan-Singapore Military to Military (MM) Dialogue
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025	
	May	Bilateral talks with the Army Commander at LANPAC (JGSDF)
		22nd Shangri-La Dialogue (JJS)
		9th International Maritime Security Conference (IMSC) held by the Singapore Navy (JMSDF)
	September	Official GSDF Chief of Staff visit
		Talks involving the Chief of Army, Chief of Defense Force, and Senior Minister of State for Defence (JGSDF)
	November	Meeting with the Chief of Air Force (JMSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025	
	September	9th Pacific Reach 2025 hosted by the Republic of Singapore (JMSDF)
Capacity Building	2025	
	June	Japan-ASEAN and Timor-Leste Ship Rider Cooperation Program
	July	Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program
		Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Program

In May 2025, during the Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore, then Defense Minister Nakatani held a Defense Ministerial Meeting with Singaporean Defence Minister Chan, at which they welcomed the advancements of unit-to-unit exchanges, including Singapore's first participation in the New Year Jump in Indo Pacific in January 2025. In August, then Senior Advisor to the Defense Minister Wakamiya exchanged views with Singaporean Senior Minister of State for Defence Zaqy, and they expressed their desire to strengthen bilateral defense cooperation, including defense equipment and technology cooperation.

In addition, in November 2025, Defense Minister Koizumi and Minister Chan held the first Defense Ministerial Meeting on the occasion of the ADMM-Plus, and the Minister Koizumi expressed his desire to enhance defense cooperation as they mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Singapore diplomatic relations in 2026. The two ministers also welcomed close communication focused on high-level exchanges and other human exchanges, including the acceptance of students at the National Defense Academy who serve as a bridge for bilateral defense exchanges, as well as close collaboration between the operational authorities of the two countries on the occasions of missions/operation and exercises. They also concurred to further strengthen the bilateral defense cooperation in various fields.

In addition, in March 2026, the two countries held the 20th Japan-Singapore MM Dialogue (Policy Talks), where they exchanged views on issues such as their regional situation and also deepened the discussion on future Japan-Singapore defense cooperation and exchanges, etc.

(5) Thailand

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Thailand

With Thailand, Japan has longstanding defense cooperation and exchanges based on the traditionally good relationship between the two countries, including the dispatch of Defense Attachés and consultations between their defense authorities from early years. At the National Defense Academy, a Thai student became the first foreign student to be accepted in 1958. Since then, Thailand has sent the largest cumulative number of students to the academy.

With the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology entering into force in May 2022, in November of 2022, Japan and Thailand upgraded their relationship to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" accelerating talks on deepening security cooperation between the two countries.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025	
	May	Bilateral talks with the Army Commander at LANPAC (JGSDF)
	June	Defense Ministerial Meeting (Shangri-La Dialogue)
		Talks between the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army and the Army Commander (JGSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025	
	July	Japan-Thailand Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF)
	2026	
	January to March	
		Multilateral Joint Exercise Cobra Gold (Joint forces)
Capacity Building	2025	
	June	Japan-ASEAN and Timor-Leste Ship Rider Program
	July	Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program
		Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Program
Others	[OSA]	
	2026	
	March	Exchange of Notes signed

(6) Timor-Leste

In October 2025, Timor-Leste officially became a member state of ASEAN. Ever since 2015, through the Hari'i Hamutuk Exercise, the MOD/JSDF has been continuously promoting defense cooperation and exchange. This includes providing ongoing technical guidance in the facilities field to the Timor-Leste Defence Force in cooperation with Australia, the United States, and New Zealand (starting in 2021).

Capacity Building	2025	
	June	Japan-ASEAN and Timor-Leste Ship Rider Cooperation Program
	July	Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Program (observer)
	August to September	
		Hari'i Hamutuk Exercise (civil engineering) (dispatch)

(7) The Philippines

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with the Philippines

The Philippines faces important sea lines of communication for Japan, such as the South China Sea and the Luzon Strait and cooperation with the Philippines and strengthening of its coastal surveillance and maritime domain awareness (MDA) capabilities are important to ensure the security of these Sea Lines of Communication. In addition to high-level exchanges, Japan and the Philippines, a U.S. ally, have frequently conducted working-level exchanges, including visits by naval vessels and Military-Military Dialogue, as well as service-to-service exchanges.

Progress is also being made on defense equipment and technology cooperation, such as transferring used defense equipment free of charge and air surveillance radar systems, as well as cooperation under OSA.

In February 2023, the "Terms of Reference (TOR) between the Ministry of Defense of Japan and the Department of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines concerning the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Activities of the Japan Self-Defense Forces in the Republic of the Philippines" was signed. Later, in September 2025, the Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) entered into force, steadily deepening security cooperation between the two countries.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025	
	May	Japan-U.S.-Australia-Philippines Defense Ministerial Meeting (Shangri-La Dialogue)
	June	Defense Ministerial Meeting (Shangri-La Dialogue)
	September	Defense Ministerial Meeting (Seoul Defense Dialogue)
	October	Defense Ministerial Video Teleconference
		Summit Meeting (ASEAN Summit Meeting)
	November	Japan-U.S.-Australia-Philippines Defense Ministerial Meeting (ADMM-Plus)
	December	Defense Ministerial Video Teleconference
	2026	
	May	Defense Ministerial Meeting
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025	
	May	Bilateral talks with the Army Commander at LANPAC (JGSDF)
	July	Observation at Talisman Sabre 25 (JGSDF)
		Japan-U.S.-Australia-Philippines quadrilateral talks (JGSDF)
	December	Bilateral talks with the Army Commander and Marine Corps Commander at LFS (JGSDF)
		Other Counter-piracy operation unit port calls
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025	
	May	Japan-Philippines Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF)
	April to May	Multilateral Joint Exercise Balikatan 25 hosted by the United States and the Philippines (Joint forces)
	May to June	Field Training with the U.S. and Philippine marine corps, etc. (Kamandag 25) (JGSDF)
	June	Japan-Philippines Bilateral Exercise (Joint forces)
	September	Japan-U.S.-Philippines Multilateral Exercise (Joint forces)
	October	Multilateral Joint Exercise hosted by the United States and the Philippines (SAMASAMA 2025) (Navy forces)
		Doshin-Bayanihan 5-25 (JMSDF)
	November	Japan-U.S.-Philippines and Japan-Philippines Multilateral Exercises (Joint forces)
	2026	
	February	Japan-U.S.-Philippines Multilateral Exercise (Joint forces)
	April to May	Multilateral Joint Exercise Balikatan 26 hosted by the United States and the Philippines (Joint forces)
	Others	
	2025	
	September	Japan-Philippines RAA enters into force
Capacity Building	2025	
	June	Japan-ASEAN and Timor-Leste Ship Rider Program
	July	Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program
		Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Program
	September	HA/DR (invitational)
		Aviation medicine (invitational)
Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation	2020	
	August	Conclusion of equipment transfer agreements for four air surveillance radar systems (delivery of three systems completed as of the end of FY2025)
		There is also ongoing educational support on operation and maintenance for personnel of the Philippine Air Force in connection with this.
	2026	
	May	Signing of the Statement on the Further Promotion of Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation between the Ministry of Defense of Japan and the Department of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines
Others	[OSA]	
	2026	
	January	Exchange of Notes signed

In April 2025, then Prime Minister Ishiba visited the Philippines and met with President of the Republic of the Philippines Marcos. They agreed to commence negotiations for the conclusion of the Japan-Philippines Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). The two leaders also confirmed the importance of early conclusion of an Agreement on the Security of Information, and agreed to facilitate discussions between the two governments.

In September 2025, the Japan-Philippines RAA came into effect, and this agreement was applied for the first time to the Japan-Philippines Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Bilateral Exercise "Doshin-Bayanihan," conducted in October 2025. In addition, following a request from the Philippines in response to the earthquake that occurred off Cebu Island late on September 30 of the same year, the JSDF took the opportunity of the joint exercise to provide transportation support for support goods within the Philippines.

The utilization of the Japan-Philippines RAA is expected to facilitate the conduct of bilateral activities, including joint exercises and disaster relief operations, and to enhance interoperability between the units.

In October 2025, Prime Minister Takaichi held a summit meeting with President Marcos, where she expressed her

desire to further strengthen Japan's relationship with the Philippines, a strategic partner, to realize a FOIP. Regarding security cooperation, the two leaders also welcomed the fact that they reached an agreement in principle on the ACSA. To commemorate the 70th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Philippines in 2026, and also considering the fact that the Philippines serves as the ASEAN Chair, the two leaders also concurred on continuing close coordination in addressing various international challenges, including the situation in the South China Sea, response to North Korea encompassing nuclear and missile issues and abductions issue, the situation in Myanmar, and the situation in the Cambodia and Thailand border areas.

In November 2025, at the 12th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), Defense Minister Koizumi held a four-country Defense Ministerial Meeting with U.S. Secretary of War Hegseth, Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Marles, and Philippine Defense Secretary Teodoro, during which they confirmed the importance of deepening various maritime and airspace-related activities while also increasing regional deterrence and response capabilities.

In January 2026, Minister for Foreign Affairs Motegi and Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Lazaro signed the Japan-Philippines ACSA.

In May 2026, Defense Minister Koizumi visited the Philippines and held a Defense Ministerial Meeting with Defense Secretary Teodoro, and they agreed to promptly establish relevant systems that include institutional frameworks for information sharing, promote discussions, and strengthen not only bilateral cooperation but also multilateral cooperation, including Japan-U.S.-Philippines cooperation, Japan-U.S.-Australia-Philippines cooperation, and ASEAN cooperation. In addition, Defense Secretary Teodoro expressed his anticipation of support for the new transfer of defense equipment system, and the two ministers signed the Statement by the Defense Ministers of Japan and the Philippines on the Further Promotion of Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation.

The two leaders observed Exercise Balikatan 26, a multilateral joint exercise hosted by the United States and the Philippines, where they shared their recognition that live-fire training of surface-to-ship missiles being conducted by the JSDF applying the Japan-Philippines RAA symbolized the deepening of defense cooperation between the two countries.

See Part IV, Chapter 3, Section 3-1-7 (Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Countries)

(8) Brunei

With Brunei, Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges in 2023, agreeing to further strengthen relationships between the defense authorities of the two countries through various exchanges, including high-level exchanges, port calls by vessels and aircraft, and goodwill exercise.

Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2026 February	Japan-Brunei Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF)
Capacity Building	2025 July	Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Program

(9) Viet Nam

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Viet Nam

With Viet Nam, a coastal country in the South China Sea, Japan is promoting high-level exchanges and other initiatives under "Japan-Viet Nam Defense Cooperation at the New Level" to contribute more actively not only to Japan-Viet Nam bilateral relations but also the peace and stability of the region as well as the international community. In November 2023, the two countries decided to develop their relationship into a comprehensive strategic partnership for peace and prosperity in Asia and the world and in the security field, they agreed on the importance of steadily advancing procedures for transfer of defense equipment, discussing OSA and others, further expanding defense cooperation and exchanges.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 December	Vice-Ministerial Meeting "2+2"
	2026 May	Summit Meeting
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 June	Japan-Viet Nam field and company officer exchange Unit exchange based on the Japan-ASEAN Ship Rider Cooperation Program
	December	Official visit to Viet Nam and exchange of views with senior naval officials, etc. (JMSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 December	Vietnamese vessel Tran Hung Dao calls at a Japanese port (JMSDF)
Capacity Building	2025 June	Underwater unexploded ordnance clearance (invitational) Japan-ASEAN and Timor-Leste Ship Rider Cooperation Program
	July	Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Program
	September	Underwater unexploded ordnance clearance (dispatch)
	October	Underwater medicine (invitational)
	November	Aviation meteorology (invitational)
Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation	2024 December	Transfer of two decommissioned material handling vehicles Related educational support on operation and repairs for the Vietnamese military

In April 2025, then Prime Minister Ishiba visited Viet Nam and met with Prime Minister Chinh. At the meeting, they welcomed progress on security cooperation between the two countries, and they agreed to establish a Foreign and Defense Vice-Ministerial Level Meeting (Vice-Ministerial

Meeting "2+2") to enhance strategic communication between Japan and Viet Nam.

As a result, in December 2025, the Japan-Viet Nam Foreign and Defense Vice-Ministerial Level Meeting (Vice-Ministerial Meeting "2+2") was held in Tokyo. During this meeting, based on the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity in Asia and the World, the two countries confirmed the need to pursue specific cooperation in the security field, and they discussed topics that included cooperation on personnel exchanges, humanitarian aid, and disaster relief activities as well as OSA and defense equipment and technology cooperation. The two sides also exchanged views on a wide range of topics, including the diplomatic and security policies of Japan and Viet Nam, the situation in the East China Sea and South China Sea, and the regional situation, such as response to North Korea including its nuclear and missile issues and abductions issue. At the same time, as the regional security environment grows increasingly severe and complex, the two countries confirmed the importance of achieving FOIP based on the rule of law in line with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). In May 2026, Prime Minister Takaichi visited Viet Nam and held summit meetings with General Secretary of the Communist Party of Viet Nam and State President Lam and Prime Minister Hung. At the meeting, they both welcomed progress on talks and exchanges in the security field, including Vice-Ministerial Meeting "2+2," and they agreed to promote further security cooperation.

(10) Malaysia

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Malaysia

Malaysia is located at an important place for maritime transportation facing the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea. In terms of its relationship with Malaysia, Japan has signed a Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges and concluded an Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology. In addition, in December 2023, the two countries elevated the status of their relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, and they are more actively promoting security cooperation between them. Furthermore, in recent years, navy to navy cooperation between the two countries has deepened. Following their first bilateral exercise in February 2024, the seventh bilateral exercise was conducted in November 2025.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 June October	 Defense Ministerial Meeting (Shangri-La Dialogue) Summit Meeting (ASEAN Summit Meeting)
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 May September	 Bilateral talks with the Army Commander at LANPAC (JGSDF) Talks with the Army Commander at the Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference (IPACC) (JGSDF) Talks with the Chief of the Royal Malaysian Navy (JMSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 April, June, and November Japan-Malaysia Bilateral Exercise (MALPAN) (JMSDF)	
Capacity Building	2025 June July	 Japan-ASEAN and Timor-Leste Ship Rider Cooperation Program Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Program
Others	[OSA] 2025 October	 Exchange of Notes signed

In October 2025, Prime Minister Takaichi visited Malaysia to attend the ASEAN-Japan Summit, where she met with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar. In terms of cooperation in the security field, the two leaders welcomed the transfer of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and rescue boats from Japan to Malaysia through OSA as well as the new agreement for Japan to provide diving support vessels and cease-fire surveillance equipment.

(11) Myanmar

In response to the coup d'état by Myanmar's armed forces that occurred in 2021, in the same year, Japan issued a statement jointly with the chiefs of staffs of 12 countries, including the United States, condemning the use of military force by the national armed forces and related security agencies against the civilian population and calling for the national armed forces to stop the violence.

(12) Laos

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Laos

In 2019, Japan signed the Japan-Laos Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges and the two countries intend to promote defense cooperation and exchanges in wide-ranging fields, including HA/DR.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 November	 Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM-Plus)
Capacity Building	2025 July	 Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Program Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program

In November 2025, Defense Minister Koizumi held a Defense Ministerial Meeting with Defense Minister Khamlieng of Laos. At this meeting, the two leaders signed a revised version of a memorandum on cooperation and exchanges in the defense field, and Defense Minister Koizumi expressed his intention to further strengthen defense cooperation between them, which was elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to commemorate the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 2025.

9 Other Asian Countries

(1) Mongolia

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Mongolia

Relations with Mongolia were elevated to a special strategic partnership for peace and prosperity in 2022 and progress is being made in wide-ranging fields of defense cooperation and exchanges.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 May Bilateral talks with the Army Commander at LANPAC (JGSDF) June Official Army Commander invitation (JGSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 May Multilateral Joint Exercise hosted by the United States and Mongolia (Pacific Airlift Rally 25) (JMSDF) October Bilateral talks with the Air Force Commander at Seoul ADEX (JMSDF)
Capacity Building	2025 May to June PKO civil engineering (invitational) July Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program (observer participation) August to September PKO civil engineering (dispatch) August to April 2026 Air traffic control (invitational)

(2) Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Other Asian Countries

In November 2025, as part of a capacity building program on medical care, Japan held lectures and hands-on training for the Kazakh Ground Forces in Kazakhstan on damage control surgery to improve lifesaving rates.

See Reference 49 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Asian Countries (FY2022 and Beyond)); Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

10 Pacific Island Countries

(1) Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Pacific Island Countries

Pacific island countries share with Japan, a maritime nation, the recognition of the importance of a free, open and sustainable maritime order based on the rule of law and are important countries that have deep historical relationships with Japan. It is also located at a strategic point where the sea lane of communication connecting Japan and Australia and the sea lane of communication from the Indian Ocean through the South China Sea to the Pacific Ocean intersect.

Japan regularly holds the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) and Japan Pacific Islands Defense Dialogue (JPIDD) with the Pacific Island countries.

(2) Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 April Japan-Tonga Defense Ministerial Meeting May Meeting involving the Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense and Papua New Guinea 2026 February 3rd Japan Pacific Islands Defense Dialogue (JPIDD) Japan-Tonga Defense Ministerial Meeting Japan-Papua New Guinea Defense Ministerial Meeting Japan-Fiji Defense Ministerial Meeting Meeting involving the State Minister of Defense and the Federated States of Micronesia
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 May Japan-Federate States of Micronesia Joint Exercise (JMSDF) June Japan-Solomon Islands Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF) Japan-Nauru Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF) July Japan-Republic of Marshall Islands Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF) July to August Multilateral Joint Exercise hosted by the United States and Australia "Talisman Sabre 25" (Joint forces) July to October Pacific Partnership 2025 (Joint forces) (Papua New Guinea, Palau) August Japan-Kiribati Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF) September Japan-Tonga Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF) Japan-Tuvalu Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF) September to October Japan-Papua New Guinea Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF) October Japan-Samoa Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF) Japan-Palau Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF) November Japan-Fiji Bilateral Exercise (JMSDF)
Capacity Building	2025 June Japan-Pacific Island Countries Ship Rider Cooperation Program July Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga (observer participation)) Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Program (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga (observer participation)) August to September Military band training (dispatch) (Papua New Guinea) September Outboard motor maintenance (dispatch) (Tonga) September to October HA/DR (heavy engineering equipment maintenance) (dispatch) (Papua New Guinea) October Unexploded ordnance disposal (invitational) (Solomon Islands) September to December Military band training (invitational) (Papua New Guinea) 2026 February Unexploded ordnance disposal (dispatch) (Solomon Islands) March Military medicine (dispatch) (Fiji)
Others	[OSA] 2025 May Fiji OSA equipment provision (first delivery) September Papua New Guinea Exchange of Notes signed October Fiji OSA equipment provision (second delivery) December Tonga Exchange of Notes signed 2026 March Fiji Exchange of Notes signed

In February 2026, the MOD hosted the 3rd Japan Pacific Islands Defense Dialogue (JPIDD), which welcomed participation by a total of 28 countries and one organization, including not only Tonga, Papua New Guinea, and Fiji, three Pacific Islands countries that possess armed forces, but also 11 Pacific Island countries without armed forces. During the keynote speech by Defense Minister Koizumi, he called for the collaborative building of an autonomous, resilient region by strengthening interconnectivity in three fields: "people-to-people," "crisis response," and "resilience."

The MOD/JSDF seeks to deepen mutual understanding both with countries that possess armed forces and those that do not through opportunities such as the JPIDD while also pursuing cooperation that includes joint training and ship rider cooperation programs.

See 3 (Promotion of Multilateral Security Cooperation); 4 (Proactive and Strategic Initiatives for Capacity Building); Section 2 (Training and Exercises with Like-Minded Countries); Section 4-4 (Ensuring Maritime Security); Reference 50 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Pacific Island Countries (FY2022 and Beyond)); Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

11 Indian Ocean Coastal Countries and Middle Eastern Countries

(1) Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Indian Ocean Coastal Countries and Middle Eastern Countries

Since peace and stability in Indian Ocean coastal countries and the Middle East are extremely important for the peace and prosperity of the international community, including Japan, from the perspective of stable use of sea lines of communication as well as energy and economy, the MOD/JSDF promotes high-level exchanges and unit-to-unit exchanges to build and strengthen cooperative relations with countries in these regions.

See Reference 51 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Middle Eastern Countries (FY2022 and Beyond)); Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

(2) Sri Lanka

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an important country located at a key point on the sea lines of communication in the Indian Ocean. In recent years, Japan has strengthened bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges with Sri Lanka.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025	
	May	Courtesy call to the Prime Minister by the Defense Minister and a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Defence
	September	Courtesy call to the President and Minister of Defence by the Defense Minister
	2026	
	March	Meeting by the Defense Minister and the Deputy Minister of Defence
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025	
	May	Bilateral talks with the Army Commander at LANPAC (JGSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025	
	April and October	Japan-Sri Lanka Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF)
	September	Search and rescue exercise hosted by the U.S. Pacific Air Forces and the Sri Lanka Air Force (Pacific Angel 25-1) (JMSDF)
Capacity Building	2025	
	July	Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program (observer participation)
	December	Air rescue and aeromedical evacuation (invitational)
Others	[OSA]	
	2025	
	September	Exchange of Notes signed

In March 2026, Defense Minister Koizumi met with Sri Lankan Deputy Minister of Defence Jayasekara in Tokyo, where they confirmed the importance of working to achieve a FOIP through stronger defense cooperation between Japan and Sri Lanka as the international community faces a new era of crisis. In addition, given Sri Lanka's important strategic position, they also welcomed progress on defense cooperation and exchanges between the two countries, including maritime security, and agreed to pursue stronger defense cooperation between them going forward.

(3) Pakistan

Located at the junction of South Asia, the Middle East, and Central Asia, Pakistan is an important state for stability in the Indo-Pacific region, and it faces an important sea lane of communication for Japan. Pakistan is a pro-Japanese country that has traditionally had a friendly relationship with Japan. Building on this relationship, the two countries have promoted defense cooperation and exchanges.

(4) Bangladesh

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Bangladesh

Located at the junction of South Asia and Southeast Asia, Bangladesh is an important state for stability in the Indo-Pacific region and it faces an important sea lines of communication for Japan. In 2023, the two countries decided to further strengthen security cooperation by upgrading their relationship to a strategic partnership, signing a memorandum on defense cooperation and exchanges, and concluding the

Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, etc. to further consolidate security cooperation.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 May	Meeting by the Prime Minister and the Chief Advisor of the Interim Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Capacity Building	2025 July	Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program (observer participation)
Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation	2026 February	Signing and entry into force of the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology

In May 2025, then Prime Minister Ishiba met with then Chief Advisor of the Interim Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Muhammad Yunus. During the meeting, they agreed to further develop the bilateral relationship between the two countries based on their strategic partnership and to strengthen their cooperation to help achieve FOIP. The two countries are also making progress in terms of national security-related cooperation, and, in February 2026, their Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology went into effect. This is expected to contribute to closer defense equipment-related cooperation between Japan and Bangladesh as well as the maintenance and improvement of the production and technological bases of Japan's defense industry.

(5) Maldives

The Maldives is an important country for the stability of the Indo-Pacific region, as it is located at a strategic point in the Indian Ocean and faces an important sea lines of communication for Japan, etc. For more than 20 years, the Maldives has served as a transit point for JSDF forces participating in UN PKO and cargo transport for counter-piracy deployment forces, and has also been an important refueling point for the deployment and return of Deployment Surface Force for Counter Piracy Enforcement (DSPE) and Deployment Air Force for Counter Piracy Enforcement (DAPE). In March 2026, to prepare to transport Japanese nationals in response to the worsening situation in the Middle East, JASDF transport aircraft were put on standby in the Maldives. Japan and the Maldives intend to promote exchanges among defense authorities in the field of maritime security and other areas.

Capacity Building	2025 July	Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program (observer participation)

(6) United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Japan and the UAE signed a memorandum of understanding on defense exchanges in 2018. Since then, the two countries have continued to deepen bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges, through high-level exchanges by defense ministers and chiefs of staff, periodical holding of military-to-military dialogues and air-to-air cooperation.

In January 2024, the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, Japan's first such agreement with a country of the Middle Eastern region, entered into force.

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 December	4th Japan-UAE Military to Military (MM) Dialogue

During the 4th Japan-UAE MM Dialogue, which was held in Tokyo in December 2025, participants exchanged views on regional affairs, etc.

(7) Israel

Japan and Israel signed the revised Japan-Israel Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges during the Japan-Israel Defense Ministerial Meeting held in 2022, confirming to continue strengthening defense cooperation and exchanges between the two countries including defense equipment and technology cooperation and service-to-service cooperation.

(8) Iran

Through opportunities for high-level exchanges among defense ministers and other officials, Japan explained to Iran about the extension of information gathering activities by JSDF to ensure the safety of Japanese-related vessels in the Middle East region and the two sides agreed to continue communication between the defense authorities.

(9) Egypt

Japan has confirmed the importance of promoting bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges in fields including PKO with Egypt through high-level exchanges.

(10) Oman

Japan and Oman signed a memorandum on defense cooperation in 2019. In addition to high-level exchanges, Japan and Oman have been continuing navy-to-navy cooperation, including MSDF ships' port calls and training.

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 May	2nd Japan-Oman Military to Military (MM) Dialogue

During the 2nd Japan-Oman MM Dialogue, which was held in Tokyo in May 2025, participants exchanged views on security cooperation between the two countries, regional affairs, etc.

(11) Qatar

Japan and Qatar signed a memorandum on defense exchanges in 2015. In 2023, the relationship between the two countries was elevated to a "strategic partnership" and cooperation in the security field, including consultations between defense authorities, was set to be further deepened.

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 September	2nd Japan-Qatar Military to Military (MM) Dialogue

During the 2nd Japan-Qatar MM Dialogue, which was held in Tokyo in September 2025, participants exchanged views on regional affairs, etc.

(12) Saudi Arabia

Japan signed a memorandum of understanding on defense exchanges with Saudi Arabia in 2016. Both countries are continuing to deepen defense cooperation and exchanges, including through the visit to Japan of His Royal Highness Prince Khalid, Defense Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in 2023 for a Defense Ministerial Meeting.

(13) Türkiye

In 2012, Japan and Türkiye signed a Statement of Intent to promote defense cooperation and exchanges.

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 August	Defense Ministerial Meeting
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 October	Talks between the Chief of Staff, GSDF, and the Commander of the Turkish Land Forces (Video Conference) (JGSDF)
	2026 January	Official invitation to the Commander of the Turkish Land Forces (JGSDF) Japan-Türkiye Bilateral Chiefs of Defense meeting (JJS)

In August 2025, then Defense Minister Nakatani visited Türkiye, becoming the first Japanese Defense Minister to ever do so, and held a defense ministerial meeting with Turkish Minister of National Defense Güler. The two ministers agreed to strengthen defense cooperation between their countries, including wide-ranging defense cooperation and exchanges between Japan and Türkiye at the high level and working level as well as between units, equipment authorities, etc. In addition, then Minister Nakatani took the opportunity of his visit to meet with Turkish Secretary of Defence Industries Görgün. They exchanged views on future defense equipment and technology cooperation.

(14) Bahrain

Japan had signed a memorandum on defense exchanges with Bahrain in 2012 and the two countries had conducted high-level exchanges and other activities. In 2023, the memorandum was revised to further promote defense cooperation and exchanges between the two countries.

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 September	Meeting between Prime Minister Ishiba and His Royal Highness Prince Salman, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain

In September 2025, then Prime Minister Ishiba met with His Royal Highness Prince Salman, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The two leaders stated that having elevated the relationship between the two countries to a strategic partnership is extremely significant, and they expressed their desire to further develop their bilateral relations and cooperation in a wide range of fields, including security.

(15) Jordan

Japan signed a Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Jordan in 2016 and the two countries continue to hold Politico-Military (PM) dialogues.

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 August	Defense Ministerial Meeting

In August 2025, then Defense Minister Nakatani met with Jordan's Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Jordan Hassan, and thanked the assistance provided by Jordan in terms of JSDF's TJNO. The two ministers also agreed to pursue further progress on defense exchanges between their countries.

12 African Countries

(1) Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with African Countries

African countries are becoming increasingly important and influential in the international community.

While multilateral frameworks such as the African Union (AU) are making positive efforts toward regional peace and stability, challenges such as serious inequality and poverty and political instability remain. Moreover, in recent years, the influences of complex crises consisting of the pandemic and Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and those of climate change (natural disasters, food crises, etc.), continue. In the face of these global challenges, cooperation with African countries is becoming increasingly important to maintain a free and open international order.

The MOD/JSDF is conducting activities to contribute to peace and stability in Africa, by such means as international peace cooperation activities in the African region and counter-piracy activities off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden based on the JSDF facility in Djibouti, and sending JSDF personnel as instructors to PKO training centers in Africa to support African countries' self-help efforts in peacekeeping operations.

See Section 3-2 (Initiatives to Support UN PKO and other activities); Chapter 1, Section 1-2-7 (1) (Counter-Piracy Operations); Reference 52 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Other Countries (FY2022 and Beyond))

(2) Djibouti

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Djibouti

Djibouti is important as it is the only country where the JSDF has an overseas facility that is used for counter piracy activities. The facility has been used to transport supplies to the unit dispatched to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) as well as to conduct trainings as part of Japan's capacity building programs for Djibouti.

In addition, in June and July 2025, the JSDF facility in Djibouti was used as a standby location for transport aircraft to promptly transport Japanese nationals as necessary in response to the worsening situation in the Middle East.

The National Security Strategy of Japan (NSS) and other documents state that Japan will, while obtaining the understanding of the government of Djibouti, utilize this operation facility on a long-term and stable basis to strengthen operational bases in African countries, etc., including rescue and transportation of Japanese nationals overseas (R/TJNO). In December of 2023, Japan concluded an exchange of notes with the government of Djibouti on the mutatis mutandis application of the Japan-Djibouti Status of Forces agreement[14] in order to secure the status of the JSDF in Djibouti responsible for rescuing and transporting Japanese nationals overseas as well as for improving readiness for such operations.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 August	Meeting between Japan's Defense Minister and Djibouti's Acting Minister of Defense
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 October	Multilateral Joint counter-piracy exercise with EU naval forces, the Djiboutian Navy, and others (DORALEH II) (JMSDF)
Capacity Building	2025 October to December	HA/DR (civil engineering and heavy engineering equipment maintenance) (dispatch)
	December	Military band training (dispatch)

In August 2025, then Defense Minister Nakatani met with Djibouti's Acting Minister of Defense of the Republic of Djibouti Hassan, where he stated that the Republic of Djibouti is an extremely important partner for Japan in realizing FOIP. He also stated his appreciation toward the Djibouti government's longstanding support for the JSDF activities in Djibouti, including the provision of land, which is essential for the JSDF to conduct operations such as counter-piracy operations, information gathering activities in the Middle East, and TJNO. The two ministers also agreed that deepening defense cooperation and exchanges between Japan and Djibouti is important for ensuring the peace and stability of the region. They also agreed to initiate a new capacity building assistance program regarding the training of military band, in addition to the existing program regarding the improvement of disaster relief capabilities.

(3) Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Other African Countries

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 May	Japan-South Africa Defense Vice-Ministerial Meeting

13 Latin American Countries

(1) Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Latin American Countries

Many Latin American countries border the Pacific Ocean and share fundamental values with Japan, and the MOD/JSDF is promoting defense cooperation and exchanges with such countries, including through military-to-military dialogue.

(2) Chile

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Chile

Chile is a strategic partner of Japan, and, in 2025, the two countries signed a memorandum on defense cooperation and exchanges. In addition to high-level exchanges, Japan and Chile have been continuing navy-to-navy cooperation, including MSDF ships' port calls and training.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 August	Signing and exchange of the Japan-Chile Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges by the Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense and the Minister of Defense of Chile, talks with the Chief of the General Staff of the Chilean Navy
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 June	Chilean vessel Esmeralda calls at a Japanese port (JMSDF)
	August	Japan-Chile Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF)
Capacity Building	2025 July	Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Program (observer participation)

In August 2025, then Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense Kobayashi visited Chile, where he talked to Minister of Defense of Chile Delpiano, and they signed and held an exchange ceremony pertaining to a memorandum on defense cooperation and exchanges between the two countries. During the talks, they agreed to continue pursuing close communication between defense authorities while also further developing defense cooperation and exchanges in various fields.

14 An exchange of notes securing the status of personnel operating in Djibouti for counter-piracy operations, which was concluded with the Djibouti government in 2009

In August 2025, the MSDF Training Squadron also called at the Port of Valparaíso, where they engaged in a goodwill exercise with the Chilean Navy and participated in a sports exchange and other events.

(3) Brazil

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Brazil

Brazil is a strategic global partner that shares values and principles with Japan. In 2020, the two countries signed a memorandum on defense cooperation and exchanges. In March 2025, then Prime Minister Ishiba had a meeting with President Lula while he was visiting Japan, during which they decided to establish the Japan-Brazil Foreign Affairs and Defense Dialogue, a dialogue mechanism on foreign policy and defense exchanges between different foreign affairs and defense authorities, as well as to promote defense personnel exchanges and unit-to-unit exchanges.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 August August	Talks involving the Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense, Chief of Joint Staff of the Brazilian Armed Forces, and Chief of Naval Staff of the Brazilian Navy First Japan-Brazil Foreign Affairs and Defense Dialogue
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 August	Talks involving the Chief of Joint Staff, Chief of Staff, MSDF, and Chief of Joint Staff of the Brazilian Armed Forces (JJS) (JMSDF)
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 August	Japan-Brazil Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF)

In August 2025, then Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense Kobayashi visited Brazil, where he talked to Admiral Aguiar Freire, Chief of Joint Staff of the Brazilian Armed Forces and Admiral Bettega, Chief of Naval Staff of the Brazilian Navy. During the talks, they agreed to further deepen defense cooperation and exchanges in various fields. In addition, to coincide with the visit, the first Japan-Brazil Foreign Affairs and Defense Dialogue was held, during which the two countries exchanged views on their regional situations, cooperation in defense fields, and a wide range of other fields, while also confirming that they will promote Japan-Brazil cooperation under their strategic global partnership.

The MSDF Training Squadron also called at the Port of Santos in August 2025 and the Port of Fortaleza in September 2025, and they conducted a goodwill exercise with the Brazilian Navy as well as various exchange events, including a sports exchange with officers of the Brazilian Navy and training on naval vessels.

(4) Peru

a. Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Peru

Peru is a strategic partner that shares fundamental values with Japan. In 2024, then Prime Minister Ishiba made an official visit to Peru and held a summit meeting with then Peruvian President Boluarte on the occasion of the APEC Summit Meeting. The two leaders agreed to promote bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges based on the Japan-Peru Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and Exchanges, which was signed ahead of the meeting.

b. Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 October	1st Japan-Peru Joint Commission meeting
Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 July	Japan-Peru Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF)

In July 2025, the MSDF Training Squadron conducted a goodwill exercise with the Peruvian Navy off the coast of Callao.

In October 2025, Japan and Peru held the first meeting of the Japan-Peru Joint Commission, where they exchanged views that included their regional situation and defense policies while also deepening their discussion of future Japan-Peru defense cooperation and exchanges.

(5) Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Other Latin American Countries

Operational Cooperation and Joint Training	2025 July August	Japan-Mexico Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF) Japan-Argentina Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF) Japan-Guatemala Goodwill Exercise (JMSDF)

See Reference 52 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with Other Countries (FY2022 and Beyond)); Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

14 China

(1) Significance of Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with China

Japan will comprehensively promote a "mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests" and build a constructive and stable relationship with China through communication at various levels, in which Japan asserts its position and calls for responsible actions while continuing dialogue, including on issues of concern and cooperation on matters of common interests.

The MOD/JSDF will continue to encourage China to play a responsible and constructive role for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, comply with international codes of conduct, and improve transparency regarding its strengthening of military capabilities buildup and its defense policies, while also conveying the concerns Japan has in a

candid manner. Japan will also make use of the Maritime and Aerial Communication Mechanism between the Defense Authorities of Japan and China, including the hotline, to avoid unexpected contingencies between the two countries.

(2) Recent Major Achievements in Defense Cooperation and Exchanges

Cooperation and Exchanges among People	2025 October November	 Summit Meeting Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM-Plus)
Cooperation and Exchanges among People (in Each Military Service)	2025 November	 Japan-China Field Officer Exchange Program conducted by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation

Interactions between Japanese and Chinese defense authorities include the Japan-China Security Dialogue, consultations between Japanese and Chinese defense authorities, and high-level consultations on maritime affairs by Japan and China, and the two countries take advantage of such opportunities to engage in dialogues at the working level. In addition, as a way to exchange mid-level leaders, mutual visits have been conducted through the Japan-China field officer exchange program organized by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. In addition, in January 2025, the MOD accepted the visit of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Eastern Theater Command delegation to Japan as the first resumption of unit-to-unit exchanges in about five years.

In October 2025, Prime Minister Takaichi held a summit meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the occasion of the APEC Summit Meeting. The two leaders reaffirmed Japan and China's broad direction of comprehensively promoting a "Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests" and building "constructive and stable Japan-China relations." In addition, Prime Minister Takaichi expressed Japan's serious concerns over China's escalation and marine survey activities in the East China Sea, including around the Senkaku Islands, and the intensification of Chinese military activities near Japan, and urged the Chinese side to address these issues. The two leaders also concurred on the importance of ensuring effective crisis management and communication between defense authorities.

On the occasion of the ADMM-Plus meeting in November 2025, Defense Minister Koizumi had a meeting with Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun, and he emphasized that, in order to achieve the broad direction agreed to by the leaders of Japan and China, which is to comprehensively promote a mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests and build constructive and stable Japan-China relations, it is essential not to ignore specific challenging issues and to repeatedly engage in candid discussions and communication. In addition, the Defense Minister conveyed once again his serious concerns about China's activities around the Senkaku Islands, an inherent part of the territory of Japan, as well as China's increased military activities in Japan's waters and airspace including its collaboration with Russia, and other activities. Furthermore, he pointed out the importance of ensuring the appropriate and reliable operation of the Hotline between Japanese and Chinese Defense Authorities, and the two leaders agreed on the importance of strengthening dialogues and exchanges between the two countries at all levels, including their defense authorities.

As part of the Japan-China Field Officer Exchange Program conducted by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, a delegation of 13 JSDF field officers visited China and held an exchange with the PLA. During the event, the delegation visited the Vice President of the Academy of Military Sciences, and the participants also toured the Zhanjiang Naval Base and other Army, Navy, and Air Force military facilities, where they exchanged views with military stakeholders.

(3) Maritime and Aerial Communication Mechanism between the Defense Authorities of Japan and China

Utilization of the Maritime and Aerial Communication Mechanism began in June 2018. The "Maritime and Aerial Communication Mechanism between the Defense Authorities of Japan and China" has been developed (1) to promote mutual understanding and confidence between Japan and China and to enhance bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges; (2) to avoid unexpected collisions; and (3) to prevent unforeseen circumstances in the sea and air from developing into military clashes or political or diplomatic issues. The mechanism's main components include (1) annual and expert meetings between the two countries' defense authorities; (2) a hotline between Japanese and Chinese defense authorities; and (3) on scene communication measures between vessels and aircraft of the JSDF and the PLA.

See Chapter 1, Section 1-2-2 (3) (Violations of Japanese Territorial Airspace by Chinese and Russian Aircraft); Reference 53 (Recent Defense Cooperation and Exchanges with China (FY2022 and Beyond))

15 Russia

Russia's aggression against Ukraine that began in February 2022 clearly undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, is a serious violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations which forbids the use of force and is an absolutely unacceptable act. Such unilateral changes to the status quo by force shake the foundations of the international order and under this position, the Government of Japan condemns Russia to the utmost degree.

The Government of Japan handles the relationship with Russia appropriately while emphasizing the solidarity of the G7 and taking the Ukrainian situation into account. At the same time, it is also necessary to maintain the minimum essential contacts with Russia, as it is one of Japan's

neighbors, in order to avoid unforeseen circumstances or unnecessary conflicts.

3 Promotion of Multilateral Security Cooperation

1 Multilateral Security Framework and Dialogue Initiatives

Multilateral framework initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region, especially the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) and the ASEAN Regional Forum[15] (ARF), have made steady progress and served as an important foundation for dialogue and cooperation and exchanges on the security of the Indo-Pacific region. Japan places importance on such multilateral frameworks and is contributing to the strengthening of cooperation and mutual confidence with countries in the region.

See Reference 55 (Record of Major Multilateral Security Dialogues (Indo-Pacific Region, FY2022 and Beyond)); Reference 56 (Multilateral Security Dialogues Organized by the Ministry of Defense); Reference 57 (Other Multilateral Security Dialogues)

(1) Security Dialogue in the ASEAN Region

a. Initiatives under the ADMM-Plus

ASEAN holds the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), a ministerial level meeting among defense authorities in the ASEAN region, and the ADMM-Plus, which includes eight other countries outside of ASEAN, including Japan[16] (so-called "Plus Countries").

The ADMM-Plus is an invaluable framework that brings together defense ministers from all ASEAN member states and Plus Countries to discuss security issues and defense cooperation and exchanges in the region and the international community. The MOD/JSDF has been actively participating in this framework.

In November 2025, Defense Minister Koizumi stated at the 12th ADMM-Plus held in Malaysia that attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and South China Sea were matters of serious concern, as well as North Korea's nuclear and missile development and the advancement of its military cooperation with Russia. He also mentioned the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and the need for the immediate resolution of the abductions issue involving North Korea. Furthermore, he stated that Russia's aggression against Ukraine is an outrageous act that shakes the very foundation of the international order; that it is important that the agreement in the Middle East leads to calming the situation and improvements in humanitarian circumstances; and that cross-domain and non-traditional threats, including cyber, outer space, and information warfare, threatened security in new dimensions.

He also referred to the trajectory of ASEAN and ADMM-Plus, noting that Japan had been among the earliest supporters of the "Concept Paper on the Implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific from a Defense Perspective," which was adopted from the standpoint of supporting in a defense perspective the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) under ASEAN leadership. He further stated that, as an official event of the first ADMM-Plus held under this concept, Japan and Indonesia had co-hosted the Maritime Cooperation and Connectivity Conference (MCCC) in November 2024. He stated that Japan had consistently supported the AOIP and would strengthen defense cooperation so that the FOIP and AOIP could generate synergy.

Defense Minister Koizumi also stated that such initiatives should be built upon the voluntary efforts of each country, and urged all defense authorities present to reaffirm three cardinal principles: (1) the rules-based international order, including the rule of law; (2) accountability; and (3) responsibility for international public goods. He further called them to take an overarching view of the Indo-Pacific region, and build a "multilayered web of interconnectivity" by layering operational cooperation, joint exercises, personnel exchanges, capacity building, and equipment and technology cooperation among countries, thereby generating a strong synergy as well as fostering a flexible, resilient, and stable order across the region.

He expressed Japan's intention to expand the scope of Japan-ASEAN cooperation from strengthening Japan-ASEAN defense relations to strengthening interconnectivity across the Indo-Pacific region centered on ASEAN, building

15 A forum aimed at improving the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region through dialogue and cooperation on political and security issues, which has been held since 1994. The ARF currently comprises 25 countries, one area and one organization (EU) as members and holds various inter-governmental meetings that are attended by both foreign affairs and defense officials to exchange opinions on the regional affairs and the security area. The 25 countries and one area are comprised of the 10 ASEAN member states (Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam m and Cambodia (since 1995); and Myanmar (since 1996)) as well as Japan, Australia, Canada, China and India (since 1996); New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the ROK, Russia, the United States. and Mongolia (since 1998); North Korea (since 2000); Pakistan (since 2004); Timor-Leste (since 2005); Bangladesh (since 2006); and Sri Lanka (since 2007).

16 The ADMM-Plus was founded in October 2010. Other than Japan, Australia, China, India, New Zealand, the ROK, Russia, and the United States participate in the Meeting as Dialogue Partners.

upon the foundations of the previously announced Vientiane Vision and Vientiane Vision 2.0; the Japan-ASEAN Ministerial Initiative for Enhanced Defense Cooperation (JASMINE), which serves to implement those visions; and the spirit of OCEAN (One Cooperative Effort Among Nations: Perspective for the Indo-Pacific), proposed at the Shangri-La Dialogue in May 2025.

The meeting also adopted the Joint Statement in Commemoration of the 15th Anniversary of the ADMM-Plus.

Under the ministerial level ADMM-Plus, there are (1) the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting (ADSOM)-Plus, (2) the ADSOM-Plus Working Group (ADSOM-Plus WG), and (3) the Experts' Working Groups (EWGs).[17] Japan is co-chairing the EWG on Maritime Security with the Philippines in the fifth cycle (2024 to 2027).

See Fig. III-3-1-6 (Organizational Chart and Overview of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus))

17 Japan served the co-chair of the EWG on Military Medicine in the first cycle (2011 to 2013), co-chair of the EWG on HA/DR in the second cycle (2014 to 2016), actively participated in each EWG in the third cycle (2017 to 2019) and served the co-chair of the EWG on PKO with Viet Nam in the fourth cycle (2021 to 2024).

Fig. III-3-1-6 Organizational Chart and Overview of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus)

ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus)

The ASEAN-hosted official meeting of the defense ministers in the Indo-Pacific region that includes countries outside the ASEAN region

* Participating countries: **11 ASEAN member states + 8 countries (Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, ROK, Russia, and the U.S.)**
In October 2025, Timor-Leste formally joined ASEAN at the ASEAN Summit.

The Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) established under the framework of the ADMM-Plus take practical actions, such as joint exercises, to address security issues in the Indo-Pacific region, which is a unique feature of the ADMM-Plus.

ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus)
...Defense Minister-level meeting; Held every year



The 12th ADMM-Plus (November 2025)



ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting (ADSOM-Plus)
...Vice-Minister or Director-General-level meeting; Held every year

Experts' Working Groups (EWGs)
established under
the ADSOM-Plus and
the ADSOM-Plus WG.

ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting Plus Working Group (ADSOM-Plus WG)
...Director-level meeting; Held every year

Experts' Working Groups (EWGs)

EWGs are established in seven fields. Each EWG is co-chaired by one of the 11 ASEAN member states and one of the 8 Plus Countries for a term of three years.

* Seven fields: **(i) counter-terrorism, (ii) HA/DR, (iii) maritime security, (iv) military medicine, (v) PKO, (vi) humanitarian mine action, and (vii) cybersecurity**

EWGs respectively take practical actions such as sharing information, holding workshops and seminars, conducting joint exercises, and submitting recommendations and reports concerning respective areas. Since 2023, Canada, France, and the United Kingdom, which are not members of the ADMM-Plus, have been permitted to participate in certain activities of the Expert Working Groups (EWGs) as observer countries.
Japan, together with the Philippines, is serving as co-chair of the 5th Cycle of the Maritime Security Expert Working Group for the 2024–2027 term.

b. The ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI)

The ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI) is a permanent hotline to facilitate communication between the defense ministers of ASEAN countries, including during emergencies. Use of the hotline has been extended to Plus Countries as well.

In 2023, Japan became the first among the Plus Countries to operationalize the ADI. Because the ADI is useful for confidence-building and managing crises in the region, the MOD/JSDF intends to utilize the ADI to promote closer communication with ASEAN and contribute more actively to peace and stability in the region with all parties.

c. ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

Regarding the ARF, in which mainly diplomatic authorities are engaged, active efforts[18] have been made in recent years for specific initiatives in nontraditional security such as disaster relief, maritime security, and peacekeeping and peace building. The MOD/JSDF has been making active contributions to this forum.

d. Multilateral Security Dialogues Hosted by the MOD/JSDF

(a) ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting

The MOD/JSDF has been attending the ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting since 2014 to strengthen bilateral and multilateral relations with ASEAN countries.

In November 2025, Defense Minister Koizumi attended the 9th ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting held in Malaysia, where he exchanged views on further deepening Japan-ASEAN defense cooperation. He stated that in order to strengthen Japan-ASEAN defense relations going forward, Japan would further enhance cooperation among the defense authorities of Japan and ASEAN by incorporating new perspectives centered on (1) HA/DR, (2) maritime cooperation, and (3) addressing challenges in non-traditional security domains.

(b) Japan-ASEAN Defense Vice-Ministerial Forum

Since 2009, the MOD has hosted the Japan-ASEAN Defense Vice-Ministerial Forum to strengthen bilateral and multilateral ties by establishing personal connections on a Vice-Ministerial level between ASEAN countries and Japan. During the 14th meeting[19] held in Fukuoka in February 2025, the Vice Minister-level defense authorities of each country revisited specific defense cooperation achievements undertaken under "JASMINE" and held candid discussions toward implementing new initiatives in the future.

(c) Guidelines for Japan-ASEAN Defense Cooperation

(1) Vientiane Vision 2.0

During the ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting in 2019, Japan presented the "Vientiane Vision 2.0," the guideline for Japan-ASEAN defense cooperation.

The "Vientiane Vision 2.0" presents an overall picture of the priority areas of the future direction of ASEAN-wide defense cooperation in a transparent manner. It retains the basic framework of the initial Vision, including its objectives, direction and means of cooperation but introduces three new principles for ASEAN-Japan defense cooperation: (i) heart-to-heart cooperation, (ii) tailored and lasting cooperation and (iii) equal and open cooperation. It also introduces contribution to ASEAN's centrality, unity and resiliency as well as the perspective of pursuing synergies between AOIP and FOIP, as new pillars.

(2) JASMINE

In 2023, at the 8th ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting, then Defense Minister Kihara newly presented the "JASMINE" to promote Japan-ASEAN defense cooperation to a new level.

Taking the current security environment into account and in line with the spirit of the "Vientiane Vision 2.0," JASMINE proposed specific defense cooperation that Japan would like to pursue together with ASEAN to realize the shared vision of the future for the Indo-Pacific region.[20] Its four pillars are: (1) Japan-ASEAN to carry out efforts to create a security environment that does not allow any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, (2) to continue and expand the Japan-ASEAN defense cooperation, (3) to pursue further friendship and opportunities between Japan and ASEAN defense officials and (4) to support defense cooperation between ASEAN, Japan, and the Pacific Island countries.

The specific initiatives proposed and announced include: the first seminar between Japan and ASEAN on the rule of law and security in the space domain; further support for confidence building and improvement of situational awareness in both maritime and air domains; seeking synergies between the OSA and existing projects such as the transfer of defense equipment and technology as well as capacity building in both hardware and software; cooperation between ASEAN countries, Japan, and Pacific Island countries through the Ship Rider Cooperation Program, and others, and the launch of a new Japan-ASEAN Capacity Building programs on WPS.

(3) Specific Initiatives for Japan-ASEAN Defense Cooperation

Japan has accumulated practical cooperation through the Japan-ASEAN Invitation Program on HA/DR, the seminar on international maritime law, the Japan-ASEAN Ship Rider

18 In addition to the Ministers' meeting at the foreign minister level, the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) and Inter-Sessional Meetings (ISM) are held each year, as well as meetings of the Inter-Sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBM/PD) and the ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC). Moreover, since the Ministers' meeting in 2002, the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogues (DOD) has been held ahead of the main meeting.

19 In addition to the ASEAN countries and the ASEAN Secretariat, Timor-Leste, which is admitted in-principle to be the member of ASEAN, participated as observers.

20 Japan and ASEAN have confirmed their shared view to promote a rules-based Indo-Pacific region that is free and open.

Cooperation Program, the Professional Airmanship Program (PAP),[21] the Japan-ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Program, and the Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Program. This has contributed to mutual understanding among the ADMM-Plus participating countries, Pacific Island countries, and others, and to enhancing connectivity in the region.

See Reference 58 (Vientiane Vision 2.0); Reference 59 (Japan-ASEAN Ministerial Initiative for Enhanced Defense Cooperation (JASMINE))

(2) Security Dialogues in the Pacific Islands Region

a. South Pacific Defense Ministers' Meeting (SPDMM)

SPDMM is an important framework for the security of the Pacific Islands Region, where defense ministers from seven countries,[22] including three Pacific Island countries (Tonga, Papua New Guinea and Fiji) that have their own militaries and others gather, and Japan has been attending this meeting as an observer since 2022.

b. Multilateral Security Dialogues Hosted by the MOD/JSDF, etc.

(a) Japan Pacific Islands Defense Dialogue (JPIDD)

Since 2021, the MOD has been hosting the JPIDD and inviting both Pacific Island countries and regional partner countries to further promote defense and security cooperation and strengthen cooperation among Japan, Pacific Island countries and partner countries in addressing regional security challenges.

At the third meeting, participation by the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Secretariat was newly secured, and ASEAN countries were invited as observers.

(b) Connectivity in Three Fields

During the 2nd JPIDD in 2024, three principles were presented: (1) Respecting Centrality, Unity, and Ownership of Pacific Island Countries, (2) Strengthening Equal, Mutually Beneficial and Supportive Relationships and (3) Supporting Collaboration between the Pacific Island Countries, Japan, and ASEAN. In addition, two coordination points were presented: (1) Strengthening Coordination between JPIDD and SPDMM and (2) Strengthening Coordination between JPIDD and PALM. Building on this, the 3rd JPIDD in 2026 called for strengthening interconnectivity in three fields — "people-to-people," "crisis response," and "resilience" — in order to jointly build an autonomous and resilient region. In particular, with regard to "people-to-people" interconnectivity and with the aim of promoting mutual understanding and strengthening interpersonal networks, Japan proposed the "Next Generation Leadership Security Program," which invites to the MOD young and mid-career officials from Pacific Island countries and the PIF Secretariat, who are expected to be responsible for security policy planning in their respective countries in the future.



Japan Pacific Island Defense Dialogue (JPIDD)

(3) Others

a. International Conferences Hosted by Private Organizations and Others

International conferences on security include not only intergovernmental conferences but also meetings organized by private organizations in which various people, such as government officials, scholars and journalists, participate to discuss medium- to long- term security issues.

Major international conferences include the IISS Asia Security Summit (Shangri-La Dialogue) and IISS Regional Security Summit[23] (Manama Dialogue) as well as the Munich Security Conference,[24] one of the most prestigious meetings on security in Europe and the United States. By actively participating in these conferences, Japan's Defense Minister and MOD officials build trust and share understanding with high-level officials of various countries and send out positive messages through meetings with defense ministers and representatives from other countries and delivering speeches at plenary sessions.

In May 2026, Defense Minister Koizumi attended the 23rd Shangri-La Dialogue and gave a speech. In his speech, he

21 Exchange program inviting ASEAN air force officers and ASEAN secretariat officers to some seminar, for the promotion of mutual understanding, confidence building, and contribution to the consolidation of the rule of law in the region.

22 In addition to the Pacific Island countries with military forces, Australia, Chile, New Zealand and France are member countries, with Japan, the United States and the United Kingdom participated as observers.

23 An international conference hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), where foreign and defense authorities and other stakeholders mainly from Middle Eastern countries exchange views on security issues. It is held annually in Manama, Bahrain.

24 This is one of the most prestigious international security meetings organized by private bodies in Europe and the United States and has been held annually (usually in February) since 1962. Usual participants in the meeting include officials at the ministerial level from major European countries as well as top leaders, ministers and lawmakers from countries in the world and key executives of international organizations.

noted that while the Indo-Pacific is a region indispensable to global peace and prosperity, it is also facing a severe reality, including attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion, economic coercion, and information manipulation. He emphasized the importance of the freedom of each nation to make their own choices by their own will as well as a free and open order. Under the updated FOIP, Japan intends to take concrete actions toward realizing a free and open order based on trust, transparency, and talks. In particular, Defense Minister Koizumi stressed that Japan remains open to talks with any country. He also stated that as new ways of warfare involving artificial intelligence, cyber, and the like continue to spread around the world, Japan will update its defense capabilities with a high degree of transparency in order to respond to these challenges. He also rejected claims that Japan is pursuing a "new militarism" and emphasized the country's path as a peace-loving nation. In addition, he expressed Japan's intention to contribute to strengthening deterrence and response capabilities in the region through the Japan-U.S. Alliance, cooperation with like-minded countries, defense equipment transfers, and defense industrial cooperation. Based on the recognition that unity, rather than division, strengthens deterrence, he powerfully declared that Japan seeks to be a reliable partner for regional stability and a connecting point that brings together the efforts of the region.

See Reference 60 (23rd Shangri-La Dialogue Speech by Defense Minister Koizumi)

b. Initiatives of Each Service

In August 2025, General Uchikura, the Chief of Staff, Joint Staff of Japan attended the Indo-Pacific Chiefs of Defense (CHOD) Conference, hosted by the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and Thailand, to share awareness on the situation and security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region and to state that Japan will further strengthen multilateral cooperation for regional peace and stability.

General Morishita, then Chief of Staff of the GSDF, participated in the Land Forces Pacific Symposium (LANPAC) 2025 held in Hawaii in May 2025, while General Arai, Chief of Staff GSDF, participated in the Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference (IPACC) held in Malaysia in September of the same year, advancing the development of army-to-army networks among Japan's ally and like-minded countries. Furthermore, in December of the same year, General Arai held the Land Forces Summit (LFS) in Japan, where army services of allies and like-minded countries shared assessments of the security environment toward the realization of FOIP. He also held the Land Forces Dialogue (LFD), during which the participants concurred on strengthening cooperation among Japan, Australia, the Philippines, and the United States.

Admiral Sakai, then Chief of Staff of the MSDF, participated in the International Seapower Symposium held in the United States in September 2025.



Chief of Staff, Joint Staff Uchikura participating in the Indo-Pacific Chiefs of Defense (CHOD) Conference

General Morita, Chief of Staff, JASDF attended the Combined Space Operations (CSpO) initiative[25] Principals' Board held in France in December 2025, and together with participants from other countries, he deepened mutual understanding to promote responsible space utilization.

See Chapter 1, Section 2-4-1 (5) (Strengthening Cooperation with Our Ally, Like-Minded Countries, and Others); Chapter 2, Section 2-1 (Cooperation in the Space and Cyber Domains); Part IV, Chapter 3, Section 2 (Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation and Related Initiatives with the United States)

2 Promoting Practical Multilateral Security Cooperation Initiatives

(1) Pacific Partnership

The Pacific Partnership[26] (PP) is an initiative in which naval vessels, primarily those from the U.S. Navy, visit countries in the Asia-Pacific region to provide medical care, conduct facility repair activities and engage in cultural exchange to strengthen cooperation between countries participating in the initiative and facilitate international peace cooperation activities through cooperation with governments, military forces, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in those countries.

In FY2025, medical activities, facility repair activities,

25 A multilateral framework comprising the United States and other like-minded countries that conduct various discussions on policy, operational, regime, and legal issues necessary for space security. Launched in 2014 by the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada, it now includes New Zealand, Germany, France, Japan, Italy, and Norway, for a total of 10 countries.

26 The U.S. forces began the Partnership in 2006 and the JSDF has been participating in it annually since 2007.

musical performances, and other exchanges were conducted in Papua New Guinea and Palau to strengthen collaboration with participating countries.

(2) Multilateral Joint Exercises

The multilateral relationships have recently shifted from the phase for confidence-building to the phase for developing more concrete and practical cooperative relationships. Various multilateral joint exercises have been actively conducted as important initiatives to effectively help this shift.

In particular, in the Indo-Pacific region, the JSDF has actively participated in multilateral joint exercises in nontraditional security, such as HA/DR and Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO). It is important to participate in such multilateral exercises not only to improve the skills level of the JSDF, but also to create a cooperative platform with relevant countries. In light of this perspective, the MOD/JSDF intends to continue to engage in such training.

Through the Indo-Pacific Deployment (IPD), the MSDF has been promoting initiatives to realize FOIP, including joint training with coastal states in the region as well as allies and like-minded countries, etc., port calls to important ports and support for capacity building in cooperation with other ministries and agencies as well as like-minded countries, etc. The IPD is highly significant as it embodies Japan's will to continuously engage in the Indo-Pacific region and Japan's proactive contribution to peace.

(3) Defense Industry Cooperation with Our Ally and Like-Minded Countries

At a time when global supply and demand for defense equipment is becoming increasingly strained, cooperation among the defense industries of Japan's ally and like-minded countries has become increasingly important. Strengthening defense industry cooperation not only between Japan and the United States but also with countries across the Indo-Pacific region will further enhance the resilience and redundancy of supply chains and contribute to improving production and maintenance capabilities across the region as a whole. Accordingly, the Partnership for Indo-Pacific Industrial Resilience (PIPIR) was launched among Japan, the United States, and other countries across the Indo-Pacific. For example, if Japan, Australia, and the United States are able in the future to share the same maintenance and sustainment infrastructure among their defense industries, interoperability among the JSDF, the Australian military, and the U.S. military is expected to improve further, enabling effective cooperation under any circumstances.

See Section 2-1-4 (FY2025 Indo-Pacific Deployment "IPD25"); Part IV, Chapter 3, Section 2-4 (Partnership for Indo-Pacific Industrial Resilience (PIPIR)); Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

4 Proactive and Strategic Initiatives for Capacity Building

1 Significance of Capacity Building

Capacity building is an initiative to actively create regional stability and enhance the global security environment by improving the capabilities of recipient countries through continuous human resource development, technical support, etc. on a steady-state basis in the fields related to security and defense.

By implementing these programs with other countries, in particular those in the Indo-Pacific region, the MOD/JSDF will encourage the partner countries' forces, etc., to adequately fulfill their roles in maintaining international peace and regional stability to create a desirable security environment for Japan.

Such activities also have the effects of (1) strengthening bilateral relationships with partner countries, (2) enhancing relationships with countries such as the United States and Australia by providing capacity building through cooperation with them and (3) improving trust in the MOD/JSDF and Japan as a whole by raising awareness at home and abroad of Japan's proactive and independent efforts to realize regional peace and stability.

In doing so, the MOD/JSDF will make effective use of the knowledge that the JSDF has accumulated to date and will work efficiently to maximize effectiveness through a combination of various means, while fully coordinating with diplomatic policies.

2 Specific Activities

The MOD/JSDF has provided capacity building in such areas as HA/DR, PKO, military medicine, air rescue and vessel maintenance to 19 countries, one organization and one region mainly in the Indo-Pacific region.

The MOD/JSDF's capacity building is aimed at improving the capabilities of partner countries in a concrete and steady manner over a certain period of time. Programs are carried out by dispatching MOD/JSDF officials to the partner country, by inviting the partner country's officials to Japan, or a combination of both.

With the dispatch method, JSDF officials with technical knowledge are dispatched to the partner country to help said country's forces and their related organizations improve their capacity through seminars, lectures and technical guidance. With the invitation method, the partner country's officials are invited to the MOD/JSDF's units and organizations to improve their capacity and to share knowledge of current

human resources development efforts by the MOD/JSDF through seminars, lectures, practical exercises and training programs. In addition, online lectures and practical training have been introduced as a new means of capacity building.

In FY2025, a total of 29 dispatch and invitational programs were conducted for 13 countries, one organization and one region.

Specifically, as part of the dispatch programs, the MOD/JSDF conducted knowledge sharing, practical skill-building support, and other programs in the following fields: Japanese language training for Indonesia, Outboard Motor Maintenance for Tonga, PKO (civil engineering) for Mongolia, underwater unexploded ordnance clearance for Viet Nam, military band training and HA/DR (heavy engineering equipment maintenance) for Papua New Guinea, civil engineering for Timor-Leste, HA/DR (civil engineering and heavy engineering equipment maintenance) and military band training for Djibouti, PKO (civil engineering) for Cambodia, military medicine for Kazakhstan, unexploded ordnance disposal for the Solomon Islands, and military medicine for Fiji.

As part of the invitational programs, the MOD/JSDF conducted knowledge sharing and other activities in the following fields: Japanese language training for Indonesia; PKO (civil engineering) for Mongolia; HA/DR and aviation medicine for the Philippines; PKO (civil engineering) for Cambodia; air rescue and aeromedical evacuation for Sri Lanka; underwater unexploded ordnance clearance, underwater medicine, and aviation meteorology for Viet Nam; military band training for Papua New Guinea; unexploded ordnance disposal for the Solomon Islands; and the Ship Rider Cooperation Program, Cybersecurity Cooperation Programs, and WPS Cooperation Programs for ASEAN.

See Fig. III-3-1-7 (Recent Capacity Building Initiatives (from April 2025 to March 2026))

3 Collaboration with Related Countries

The MOD/JSDF conducts capacity building for third-party countries in collaboration with the United States, Australia and other countries.

Specific quadrilateral cooperation by Japan, the United States, Australia and New Zealand includes participation by the JSDF, U.S. Armed Forces and others in the “Hari’i Hamutuk” capacity building exercise for Timor-Leste organized by Australian Defence Forces (ADF), during which technical guidance on engineering and heavy equipment maintenance was provided to logistic support units of the Timor-Leste Defence Forces.

Fig. III-3-1-7 Recent Capacity Building Initiatives (from April 2025 to March 2026)

Capacity Building

Capacity building … Project aiming to improve the capabilities of partner countries in a concrete and steady manner over a certain period of time through the dispatch of JSDF personnel, and invitation of personnel from recipient countries, etc.
Dispatch … Dispatch JSDF personnel or others with expert knowledge to partner countries to conduct seminars, exercises and lectures, and provide technical guidance, etc., with the aim of improving the capabilities of military forces and related knowledge of recipient countries.
Invitation … Invite officials of partner countries to the MOD, JSDF units or other related organization to enhance the capacity of partner countries' officials through training such as seminars, exercises, lectures, education drills, etc., while sharing knowledge about MOD and JSDF personnel development initiatives.

Some examples of countries and fields in which capacity building has been provided (April 2025-March 2026)

ASEAN



Cybersecurity
Technical guidance

Mongolia



Air Traffic Control
Air traffic control training

Viet Nam



Underwater unexploded ordnance disposal
Technical guidance

Sri Lanka



Air rescue and aeromedical evacuation
Aeromedical evacuation unit training

Indonesia



Japanese language training
Japanese language instruction

Solomon Islands



Unexploded ordnance disposal
Training on types of ammunition

VOICE

Capacity Building Project on Unexploded Ordnance Disposal for Solomon Islands

HIRAKAWA Shoko, Major (GSDF), Planning Section, Policy Division, Defense Cooperation Center, Ground Staff Office, Ichigaya

The capacity building project for Solomon Islands provides the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Unit with technical guidance on the handling of unexploded ordnance (UXO) that remains in the country even 80 years after the end of World War II, particularly UXO from the former Japanese army. It also shares knowledge on providing risk education to the general public. UXO dating back to the Pacific War continues to hinder people's daily lives and regional development.

As a member in charge of this program, I traveled to the area and witnessed firsthand the earnest faces of the residents, including children, who seriously participated in UXO risk education. The experience made me strongly feel that this program is directly contributing to the protection of people's lives and the safety and development of local communities, and that, somewhere in the world, my work is helping to protect someone's life and bring a smile to their face.

Japan's capacity building projects are initiatives in which Japan and partner countries mutually enhance their capabilities and contribute to regional stability while building relationships of trust. I experienced firsthand how the accumulation of this steady cooperation fosters trust and contributes to the peace and stability of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. I was also reminded that being able to contribute to the world by engaging directly in the field with matters of human life and peace is one of the most significant appeals of serving in the GSDF.

MUGURUMA Masateru, Director, Japan Mine Action Service (JMAS)

Following my retirement from the GSDF, I have been working in the Japan Mine Action Service (JMAS). JMAS was established in 2003 and is currently active in countries such as Cambodia, Palau, Micronesia, and Senegal. Former GSDF and MSDF personnel utilize the knowledge and experience gained in the JSDF regarding landmines and UXO to conduct disposal operations and safety education.

In the capacity building project for Solomon Islands, participation up until now had mainly involved the GSDF Ordnance School. This time, however, with JMAS joining the project, education on UXO response and risk avoidance was provided through public-private collaboration to the country's EOD Unit and local residents.

I got a strong sense that the project was having an impact as I watched the participants listen attentively to the education sessions, nodding along and asking questions one after another. I felt that cooperation by former JSDF personnel, who share common knowledge and experience with active-duty members through their own past service, while also bringing experience from various settings in the private sector, will continue to be a major asset going forward.

In addition, engagement with local residents and working-level personnel fosters strong relationships of trust and deepens relations between Solomon Islands and Japan, which contributes to regional stability. This visit made me strongly aware of the high level of trust that the local residents place in Japan.

During my stay, I paid my respects to those who lost their lives in the last war, praying for their repose and for peace. The project provided an opportunity to reflect deeply on the value of peace and the importance of continued efforts to preserve it, while also confronting the reality that, even 80 years after the end of the war, there are still people suffering from the damage caused by UXO. It is my sincere hope that a safe and prosperous society will be realized in Solomon Islands as soon as possible.



Major HIRAKAWA Shoko (third from left) and
Mr. MUGURUMA Masateru (second from right)

Section 2 Training and Exercises with Like-Minded Countries

It is essential to strengthen deterrence and response capabilities and stabilize the security environment surrounding Japan to maintain peace in Japan. To this end, the Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces (MOD/JSDF) is actively promoting bilateral/multilateral exercises with Japan's ally, like-minded countries, and others in the wider Indo-Pacific region as part of its efforts to achieve the vision of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP). In particular, MOD/JSDF is strengthening its partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region, which is closely connected to Japan's national security, and is working 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 exercise with our ally, like-minded countries, and others, and by strengthening deterrence and response capabilities through collaboration and cooperation, thereby creating a synergistic effect.

1 Bilateral Exercises with Like-Minded Countries

1 FY2025 "Brunet-Takamori 25" Field Exercise with the French Army

In September 2025, the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) conducted a bilateral exercise with France in New Caledonia, a French overseas territory. For the first time, French naval and air force units stationed in New Caledonia in this exercise. The training contributed to enhancing operational execution capabilities and tactical proficiency in counter-guerilla and commando operations, while promoting mutual understanding and trust with the French Army and other forces.

2 FY2025 field training exercise with the British Army (Vigilant Isles 25)

In November 2025, the GSDF conducted a bilateral exercise with the British Army in Japan. The training contributed to improving operational execution capabilities and tactical proficiency through the implementation of counter-landing operation training, while promoting mutual understanding and trust with the British Army.

3 FY2025 "Dharma Guardian 25" Field Training Exercise with the Indian Army

From February to March 2026, the GSDF conducted a bilateral exercise with the Indian Army in India. The exercise involved training under simulated enemy unmanned aerial vehicles(UAV) attacks and intelligence activities, including the use of counter-UAV equipment to neutralize these threats. Through these activities, the GSDF enhanced operational execution capabilities and tactical proficiency in counter-terrorism operations, while promoting mutual understanding and trust with the Indian Army.

4 FY2025 Indo-Pacific Deployment "IPD25"

Over a period of approximately seven months from April to November 2025, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) widely deployed surface and submarine units throughout the Indo-Pacific region, including four destroyers, one transport vessel, one patrol aircraft, and several submarines. During IPD25, the MSDF visited 22 countries, including the Independent State of Samoa, Tuvalu, and the Republic of Nauru, all of which were first-time visits for the MSDF as part of such a deployment. The deployment also included 27 bilateral/unilateral joint exercises and three goodwill exercises[1].

In particular, part of the IPD25 units conducted bilateral exercises with the Federated States of Micronesia, the Solomon Islands, the Republic of Nauru, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Kiribati, the Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu, the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, the Independent State of Samoa, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of Fiji, thereby strengthening cooperation with Pacific Island countries.

MOVIE: FY2025 field training exercise with the French Army (BT25)
URL: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=RqcX4nCHFu8&pp=ygUY44OW44Oq44Ol44ON44K_44Kr44Oi44Oq

1 In FY2025, exercises were conducted with Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei, the Seychelles, Sri Lanka, the Marshall Islands, South Africa, Singapore, the U.K., Qatar, the ROK, and other countries.

5 Japan-Philippines HA/DR bilateral exercise "Doshin-Bayanihan 5-25"

In October 2025, the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) participated in the Japan-Philippines HA/DR bilateral exercise "Doshin-Bayanihan 5-25" conducted in the Philippines. This exercise, aimed at improving the ASDF's HA/DR capabilities and strengthening cooperation with the Philippine Air Force, involved airdrop exercises and mass casualty medical response training.

The Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) was applied for the first time during this exercise. In addition, following a request from the Philippine side in response to the earthquake off Cebu Island that occurred late at night on September 30 of the same year, a JSDF transport aircraft participating in the joint exercise provided transportation support for relief supplies within the Philippines.

2 Multilateral Exercises with Like-Minded Countries and Others

1 Multilateral Joint Exercise Hosted by the United States and Australia "Talisman Sabre 25"

From July to August 2025, the JSDF participated in a multilateral joint exercise hosted by the United States and Australia with other 18 participating countries: Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Thailand, Tonga, and the United Kingdom. The exercise included joint maritime operations training, amphibious operations training, and space operations training, among others. It was intended to maintain and strengthen the JSDF's joint operational capabilities as well as enhance coordination and trust with other participating countries' armed forces.

In particular, as a result of accelerated mutual deployment procedures due to the Japan-Australia RAA, the exercise saw participation by more than 1,500 JSDF personnel, the largest number ever for this exercise. In addition, the JSDF participated for the first time in an experimental exercise on underwater acoustic communications for maritime autonomous systems conducted as part of the initiatives under Pillar II of AUKUS.

2 Multilateral Joint Exercise Hosted by the United States and the Philippines "Balikatan 25"

From April to May 2025, the JSDF participated alongside Australia in this multilateral joint exercise hosted by the United States and the Philippines. The JSDF had been participating in the exercise as an observer since 2012. However, in FY2025, the JSDF dispatched MSDF vessels and other assets for the first time, and participated in a field training exercise for multilateral maritime maneuvers; subject matter expert exchanges related to integrated air and missile defense, responses to cyberattacks, etc.; humanitarian and civil assistance activities; and more.

3 FY2025 Field Training Exercise with the Forces of the United States, Indonesia, and Others "Exercise Super Garuda Shield 25"

From August to September 2025, the JSDF participated in a multilateral joint exercise hosted by the U.S. Army and the Indonesian Army. Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, the ROK, and the United Kingdom participated in the exercise. Through the joint conduction of airborne operations, amphibious operations, and live-fire training, the exercise enhanced the JSDF's tactical proficiency and strengthened cooperation with the armed forces of participating countries. In training related to airborne operations, ASDF provided aircraft support, while training related to amphibious operations was conducted in coordination with the MSDF transport vessel JS Osumi.

4 FY2025 Multilateral Exercise "Khaan Quest 25"

The GSDF and ASDF participated in a multilateral exercise hosted by Mongolia and the United States in June 2025. This exercise is one of the world's largest multilateral exercises aimed at improving capabilities associated with UN PKO. During this exercise, the GSDF participated in convoy escort operations, U.N.-designated facilities protection, and other field training exercises, while the ASDF provided necessary information to support aircraft operations. The

MOVIE: "Super Garuda Shield 25"
URL: https://youtu.be/epv7SB0Wufo?si=Eodk7J4j1Zw_rzc0

exercise contributed to preserving and improving various capabilities useful when dispatched for PKOs, acquiring and accumulating the relevant expertise, and promoting mutual understanding and strengthening relationships of trust with the various participating countries.

5 Multilateral Airborne Exercise Hosted by the Italian Army "Mangusta 25"

In November 2025, the GSDF participated in the multilateral airborne exercise hosted by the Italian Army "Mangusta 25", and conducted a series of operational activities following joint free-fall parachute drop together with units from Italy, the United States, and various European countries. This was the first time the GSDF participated in an airborne operations training conducted within mainland Europe. By jointly conducting airborne operations, the exercise enhanced the tactical proficiency of the JSDF and strengthened coordination with the armed forces of participating countries.

6 Multilateral Airborne Exercise

In January 2026, the GSDF conducted its first multilateral exercise in Japan focused on airborne operations to be hosted by the GSDF. The exercise included airborne drops and other activities by Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom, as well as a series of activities following the drops including ground operations. In addition, ten countries—Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Poland, Singapore, Türkiye, Malaysia, and Spain—participated as observers. The exercise strengthened cooperation and relationships with Japan's allies and like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific region, while improving tactical proficiency in airborne operations.

7 Joint Training Conducted in Connection with the Deployment of the U.K. Carrier Strike Group (CSG25)

The United Kingdom deployed a carrier strike group, including the aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales, to Japan from August to September 2025. During this deployment, the MSDF conducted a multilateral exercise with the U.K. Carrier Strike Group, a U.S. carrier strike group, an Australian destroyer, and frigates from Spain and Norway, among others. In addition, the ASDF conducted joint training with F-35B fighter aircraft of the U.K. Royal Navy.

8 "Atlantic Eagles" North America and Europe Goodwill Visit

In September 2025, the ASDF conducted its first-ever deployment of fighter aircraft to Europe and carried out unit-to-unit exchanges with various countries. In order to embody the recognition that the security of Europe and the Indo-Pacific is inseparable and interconnected, the ASDF visited bases in Alaska in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Germany, and promoted mutual understanding through exchanges with units in each country.

See Fig. III-3-2 (Major Bilateral/Multilateral Exercises with Like-Minded Countries and Others); Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

VOICE

On Participating in a Multinational Airborne Exercise (Mangusta 25) in Italy

MATSUDA Kei, Captain (GSDF), Training Officer, 1st Airborne Brigade (Narashino)

I participated in the "Mangusta 25" multinational airborne exercise in Italy in November 2025.This was the first time the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) conducted a field training exercise on the European mainland. Being responsible for the parachute drops from Italian Air Force aircraft, I ensured that our personnel descended safely. In the culminating comprehensive exercise, the GSDF accomplished the mission, overcoming the language barriers and working in unity among the seven participating forces. Amid the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II, the exercise reaffirmed the significance of operating side by side with other personnel on the soil of a like-minded country. With a renewed sense of pride and confidence from participating in this first exercise for the GSDF, I will continue to dedicate myself to my duties.



Parachute drop from an Italian Armed Forces aircraft using the Italian Armed Forces' parachute in Italy

Commentary

U.K. Carrier Strike Group Port Calls

In 2025, the United Kingdom deployed Carrier Strike Group 25 (CSG25), with the aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales as its flagship, to the Indo-Pacific Region via the Mediterranean Sea. From August to September, Japan received port calls by the U.K. aircraft carrier, as well as the U.K. Royal Navy destroyer HMS Dauntless and Royal Norwegian Navy frigate HNoMS Roald Amundsen. This marked the first time that a Norwegian naval vessel had made a port call in Japan.

These port calls served as an opportunity to conduct various forms of defense cooperation and exchange, including a multilateral exercise involving Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Spain, and Norway. In particular, the first protection mission by the JSDF for the U.K. armed forces as well as the first landing of a U.K. F-35B aircraft on the JS Kaga were achieved. Such achievements showed that the interoperability between Japanese and U.K. units has been enhanced, enabling even closer cooperation. In addition, during the U.K. carrier's Yokosuka port call, then Prime Minister Ishiba paid a visit to inspect the vessel, and during its port call in Tokyo, forums and special tours were held on board.

It was the first time in approximately four years for the CSG to make a port call in Japan since its previous visit in 2021. Amid an increasingly severe and uncertain security environment surrounding Japan, these port calls demonstrate the commitment of the United Kingdom and Norway to contributing to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific Region, while further strengthening Japan-U.K. and Japan-Norway security and defense cooperation and contributing to Japan's security. The MOD/JSDF will continue to cooperate closely with like-minded countries that share fundamental values and strategic interests with Japan.



Then Prime Minister Ishiba inspecting the U.K. carrier HMS Prince of Wales



U.K. carrier HMS Prince of Wales arriving in Tokyo

VOICE

Voice of JSDF Personnel Who Participated in the "Atlantic Eagles" North America and Europe Goodwill Visit

NAKASHIMA Joji, Captain (ASDF), Flight crew, Pilot,2nd Air Wing (Chitose)

As an F-15 fighter pilot, I participated in the "Atlantic Eagles" North America and Europe goodwill visit from September to October 2025.Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) fighter aircraft and other units made goodwill visits to North America and Europe, with the aim of deepening mutual understanding as well as promoting defense cooperation and exchanges with host country air forces through unit interactions.

Departing from Chitose Air Base, Japan's F-15s, supported by Japanese and U.S. aerial refueling tankers, became the first ASDF fighter aircraft to cross the Atlantic Ocean. Stops were made in Eielson Air Force Base in the United States, Goose Bay Air Base in Canada, RAF Coningsby in the United Kingdom, and Laage Air Base in Germany.

During the transatlantic crossing, we received rescue standby support from the Royal Canadian Air Force. In Europe, we were welcomed by aircraft from the U.K. Royal Air Force and the German Air Force. I received firsthand warm hospitality from host country air forces and witnessed the defense cooperation that has deepened over the years. As my squadron, the 201st Tactical Fighter Squadron, maintains a sister squadron relationship with the No. 3 Squadron of the U.K. Royal Air Force, this visit allowed our two squadrons to further deepen our ties.

I intend to apply the experiences gained from this visit to my duties and training and contribute to further strengthening cooperation and coordination with our ally and like-minded countries.



Captain Nakashima (left) shaking hands with a German Air Force pilot after landing in Germany

VOICE

The Strategic Significance of the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group Deployment to the Indo Pacific and the UK's Ongoing Commitment to Regional Security

Commodore **James Blackmore**, Commander, U.K. Carrier Strike Group

The United Kingdom is committed to supporting a free and open Indo Pacific and strengthening the international rules based order. The deployment of the UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG) under Operation HIGHMAST demonstrated the UK's resolve to remain a long term contributor to regional stability, working closely with partners and allies to uphold freedom of navigation, enhance maritime security, and deepen defence cooperation.

The UK's contribution to regional security in the Indo-Pacific (IP) is underpinned by its commitment to a free and open region, as well as its strategic ambition to strengthen partnerships and uphold international rules and norms. The deployment of the UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG), centred on the Flag Ship HMS PRINCE of WALES, during Operation HIGHMAST exemplified this commitment. Through an ambitious programme of military-to-military engagements, the UK demonstrated its ability to project credible combat power at reach, reaffirming its role as a reliable partner in the region. The CSG's activities included joint exercises with the Indian and Indonesian navies, as well as an advance level of collaboration with US, Australian, New Zealand, and Japanese warships, alongside NATO partners such as Canada, Norway, and Spain. These engagements spanned freedom of navigation assertions, multi-domain exercises, and UNSCR enforcement, showcasing the UK's ability to operate effectively with partners and allies.

The deployment also extended beyond military objectives, incorporating diplomatic, trade, and cultural engagements. By hosting government ministers during port visits, the CSG facilitated high-level international dialogue, further strengthening regional security cooperation. This integrated approach, involving multiple government departments, demonstrated the UK's commitment to fostering stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.

Strategic Significance of the UK Carrier Strike Group's Deployment to the Indo-Pacific

The deployment of the UK Carrier Strike Group to the Indo-Pacific was a landmark event, symbolising the UK's strategic intent to play a proactive role in the region. The CSG projected hard power while delivering significant diplomatic, economic, and soft power outcomes. It laid the groundwork for deeper cooperation to ensure national security and prosperity amongst like-minded partners. The deployment demonstrated the flexibility and responsiveness of maritime forces, able to react to world events on a global scale to provide choice to governments and freedom of action. Beyond the direct military benefits, the deployment also was a driver of strategic growth, with significant capability partnership and export opportunities supported throughout the region across multiple domains, including Maritime, Air, Cyber, and Complex Weapons. The breadth of opportunities under discussion underscores the UK's role as a trusted strategic and economic partner.

Building on the UK's 2021 deployment to the region, Operation HIGHMAST marked a step-change in the UK's strategic presence in the Indo-Pacific. By leveraging high-profile defence engagements, strengthening bilateral relationships, and fostering industry collaboration, objectives in security, diplomacy, and economic growth were realised. The deployment also highlighted the value of integrated government efforts and the unique convening power of Carrier Strike Groups.

The Importance of Multinational Naval Cooperation

Multinational naval cooperation is a cornerstone of the UK's strategy in the Indo-Pacific, as it enhances interoperability, strengthens alliances, and upholds international norms such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The CSG's deployment demonstrated the operational value of such cooperation, with activities including cross-deck operations, tactical training, task group collaboration, and multi-domain exercises. These efforts not only improved interoperability but also showcased the global benefits of shared logistics infrastructure and operational maintenance capabilities in foreign ports, such as those in Australia, Singapore, and Japan.

The activities with regional partner forces, including the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force, United States Navy, the United States Marine Corps, the Royal Australian Navy, and the Royal New Zealand Navy, highlighted the importance of genuine interchangeability and collaboration. For instance, the first UK F-35 landing on a Japanese ship, JS KAGA, the cross-deck operations with US and Japanese forces, as well as the participation of JS AKEBONO, which joined the CSG for approximately two months of joint exercises

demonstrated the operational and strategic advantages of such partnerships. These activities reinforced the UK's commitment to collective security and its ability to operate seamlessly with partners and allies in the region.

UK Perspective on the Evolving Regional Security Environment

The Indo-Pacific is a region of growing geopolitical significance, characterised by economic dynamism and increasing tensions. As set out in the UK's National Security Strategy, and in keeping with our belief in the indivisibility of Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security, the UK's bilateral relationships and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific are designed to enhance the international security on which our shared prosperity depends. The UK is committed to defending and shaping international rules and norms, strengthening regional partnerships, and protecting freedom of navigation.

The UK's strategic initiatives, such as AUKUS with Australia and the US, and the Global Combat Air Programme with Japan and Italy, exemplify its approach to fostering capability partnerships that enhance interoperability. These initiatives signal the UK's ambition to bridge geographic regions and bring partners closer together, reinforcing its role as a global security actor.

The CSG's deployment to Japan further underscored the UK's commitment to the Indo-Pacific. A historic visit to Tokyo by HMS Prince of Wales, the hosting of then Japanese Prime Minister Ishiba and defence industry leaders, as well as engaging in cultural and public diplomacy activities, highlighted the depth of the UK-Japan defence relationship. The visit also demonstrated the UK's sovereign capability and its ability to operate alongside key partners and allies, sending a clear message to both friends and adversaries about the strength of its alliances.

Conclusion

The UK's strategic engagement in the Indo-Pacific, exemplified by the Carrier Strike Group's deployment, reflects its commitment to regional security, economic growth, and the upholding of international norms. By fostering multinational multi-domain cooperation, strengthening partnerships, and addressing evolving security challenges, the UK has positioned itself as a trusted partner in the region. This integrated approach contributes to the stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific.



Commodore James Blackmore



Japanese, U.S., and Canadian naval vessels sailing alongside HMS Prince of Wales



A U.K. Royal Navy F-35B taking off from JS Kaga
Photo courtesy of the U.K. Royal Navy

Fig. III-3-2 Major Bilateral/Multilateral Exercises with Like-Minded Countries and Others



Section 3 Efforts to Support International Peace Cooperation Activities

1 Frameworks for International Peace Cooperation Activities

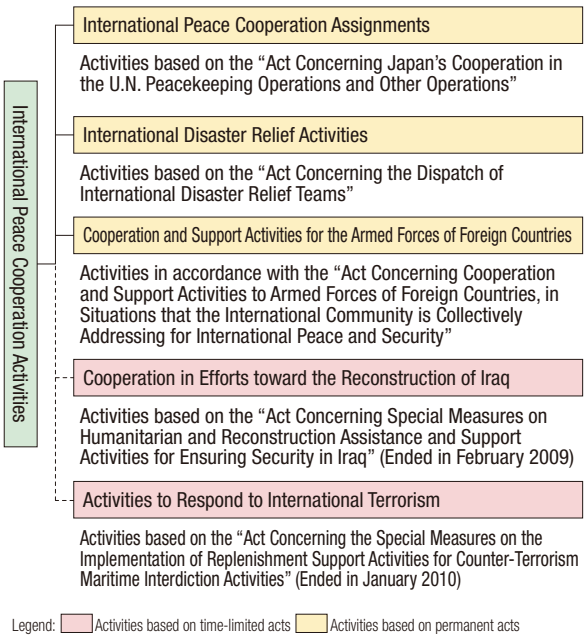
1 Frameworks for International Peace Cooperation Activities

The Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces (MOD/JSDF) is proactively conducting international peace cooperation activities and other initiatives in tandem with diplomatic activities.

International peace cooperation activities conducted by the MOD/JSDF as primary missions[1] include international peace cooperation assignments such as cooperation in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKO), international disaster relief activities in response to large-scale disasters overseas and cooperation and support activities in response to Joint International Peace Response Situations.

See Fig. III-3-3-1 (International Peace Cooperation Activities Conducted by the JSDF); Part II, Chapter 4, 5 (Framework for Contributing to the Peace and Stability of the International Community); Reference 12 (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); Reference 14 (Summary Comparison of Laws Concerning International Peace Cooperation Activities); Reference 63 (The JSDF Record in International Peace Cooperation Assignments)

Fig. III-3-3-1 International Peace Cooperation Activities Conducted by the JSDF



2 Continuous Initiatives to Promptly and Accurately Carry Out International Peace Cooperation Activities

To be a proactive contributor to international peace cooperation activities, it is important for the JSDF to be fully prepared for any future operations. For this reason, all the branches of the JSDF designate dispatch stand-by units and always maintain a state of readiness. In addition, engineering units, staff officers and others as well as C-2 transport aircraft and C-130H transport aircraft are registered with the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS) to enable the UN Headquarters to grasp the PKO dispatch preparation status of each country more specifically.

The JSDF is also enhancing information gathering

1 Missions collectively referring to the "primary mission" and "secondary missions" defined in Article 3 of the JSDF Law. "The primary mission" is defense of Japan while "secondary missions" are the maintenance of public order and activities in response to Important Influence Situations,, as well as international peace cooperation activities.

capabilities and protection capabilities, which are required for the JSDF units to carry out their missions while ensuring the safety of personnel and units in international peace cooperation activities and other similar ones. Furthermore, in order to respond to various mission environments and prolonged missions, the JSDF is improving its capabilities for transport, deployment and information communication, as well as developing a structure of logistics and medical support for conducting smooth and continuous operations.

With regard to the education necessary for engaging in international peace cooperation activities, the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) International Peace Cooperation Activities Training Unit, which belongs to the Ground Component Command, provides training for GSDF personnel to be deployed to international peace cooperation activities, as well as supports their training. In addition, the Japan Peacekeeping Training and Research Center (JPC) of the Joint Staff College offers not only basic education courses on international peace cooperation activities, but also specialized education to train personnel who can be appointed as contingent commanders of UN PKO missions and staff officers of mission headquarters. These specialized courses are conducted by using UN standard training materials and foreign instructors. Based on the current situation of more multi-dimensional and complicated international peace cooperation activities, JPC has also provided education for personnel from foreign militaries and other Japanese ministries and agencies. The initiative aims to promote the coordination and cooperation and contribute to more effective international peace cooperation activities.

3 Welfare and Mental Health Measures for Dispatched JSDF Units

The MOD/JSDF is implementing various family support and mental health support measures for dispatched JSDF personnel and their families to alleviate any anxieties they may go through during the dispatch. For example, depending on the characteristics of the duties of the unit to be dispatched, the MOD/JSDF provides JSDF personnel with necessary measures such as the following: (1) education before the dispatch on necessary knowledge on how to reduce stress; (2) mental health checks before and during the dispatch as well as after returning to Japan; (3) counseling on anxieties and concerns during the dispatch, conducted by staff specially trained for carrying out mental health care; (4) dispatch of a mental health care team mainly including a medical officer with expertise on mental health care; (5) stress reduction education upon returning to Japan; and (6) special medical checkup after returning to Japan.

2 Initiatives to Support UN PKO and other activities

As a means to promote peace and stability in conflict regions around the world, UN PKOs have expanded their missions in recent years to include such duties as the Protection of Civilians (POC), the promotion of political processes, providing assistance in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) into society of former soldiers, Security Sector Reform (SSR), the rule of law, elections, human rights and other fields, in addition to such traditional missions as ceasefire monitoring.

International organizations such as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), respective governments, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and others conduct relief and restoration activities for the victims of conflicts and large-scale disasters from a humanitarian perspective and from the viewpoint of stabilizing affected countries.

Japan has been promoting international peace cooperation assignments in various regions, including Cambodia, the Golan Heights, Timor-Leste, Nepal and South Sudan for more than 30 years and these activities have been highly praised both domestically and internationally. Currently, Japan dispatches staff officers to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO).

Japan will continue to contribute actively to international peace cooperation activities by drawing on the experience accumulated to date and promoting human resource development, as well as through activities such as the dispatch of JSDF personnel to mission headquarters, capacity building in Japan's fields of expertise, and the dispatch of JSDF personnel to the UN Headquarters.

1 Dispatch to the MFO

(1) Significance of Dispatch to the MFO

The Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) was established by the Protocol to the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty (August 1981) as an organization to undertake the tasks and responsibilities of the UN force and observer mission stipulated in the treaty.



REFERENCE: International peace cooperation operation
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/gsdf/about/pko30/index.html

The MFO is tasked with monitoring the ceasefire between Egypt and Israel and since its inception in 1982, has contributed to peace and stability in the Middle East, which is a foundation of peace and prosperity for Japan, by helping to facilitate dialogue and confidence building between the two countries.

Amidst this, the MFO requested that Japan send staff officers to its headquarters, and, with a view to making proactive contributions to international peace efforts, Japan has been dispatching staff officers to the MFO as Internationally Coordinated Operations for Peace and Security since 2019.

(2) Activities by Staff Officers and Others

As of March 2026, four GSDF personnel are engaged in the operations at the MFO Headquarters (Liaison Branch and Force Engineering Office, Support Branch) located in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula.

Since 2019, Japan has been dispatching two staff officers to the Liaison Branch, where they are engaged in liaison and coordination with Egypt and Israel, as well as the formulation of medium- to long-term operational plans for related to these activities.

Since 2023, Japan has also been dispatching two staff officers to Force Engineering Office, Support Branch to work on planning and progress management related to the renewal of various facilities at the MFO.

Additionally, one liaison staff member has been dispatched to Cairo to liaise and coordinate with the relevant organizations in order to help the officers dispatched to the MFO carry out activities smoothly and effectively.

These activities demonstrate Japan's more active involvement in the peace and stability of the Middle East. This is also expected to promote collaboration with the United States and other countries dispatching officers, and to provide opportunities for human resources development.

See Fig. III-3-3-2 (MFO Relevant Maps), Fig. III-3-3-3 (Organizational Chart of MFO)

Fig. III-3-3-2 MFO Relevant Maps

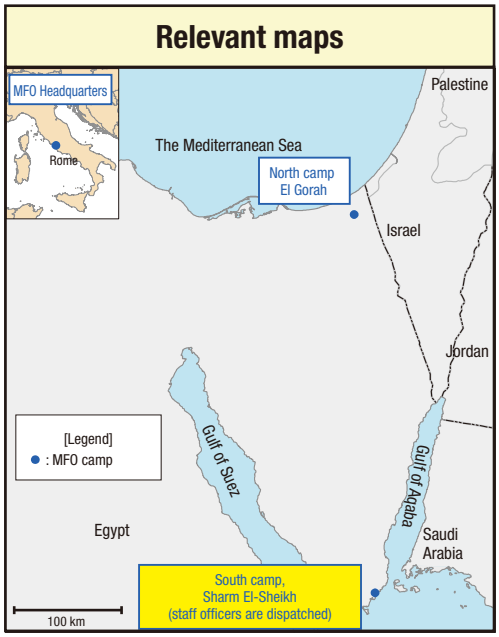
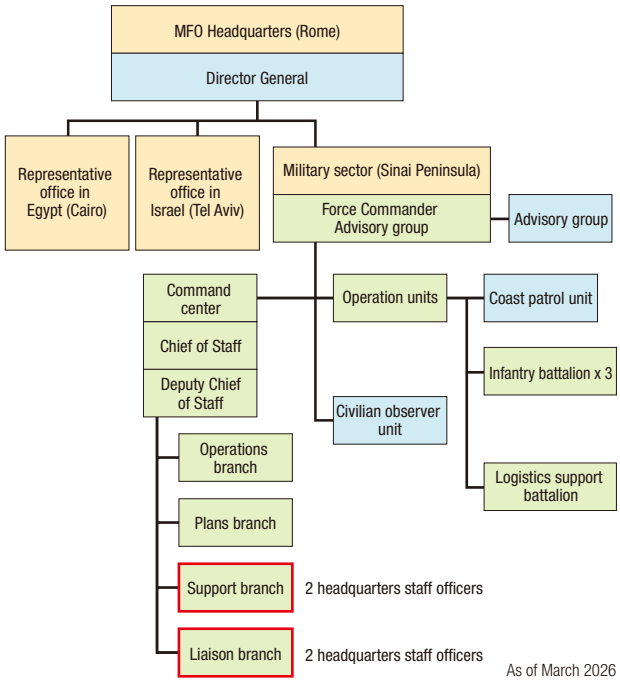


Fig. III-3-3-3 Organizational Chart of MFO



(Note) Red line indicates a department/division in which Japanese personnel are placed.

REFERENCE: The Sinai Peninsula international peace cooperation assignments (Internationally Coordinated Operations for Peace and Security)
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/kokusai_heiwa/pko/201904_egy.html



Personnel serving in the MFO

2 United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)

(1) Significance of the Dispatch of Personnel to UNMISS

In July 2011 following South Sudan's independence, with the objective of consolidating peace and security as well as helping South Sudan to establish the conditions necessary for its development, UNMISS was established. In response to requests from the UN for cooperation with UNMISS, particularly for the deployment of GSDF engineering units, Japan has dispatched units and personnel including headquarters staff officers and JSDF engineering units.

South Sudan shares borders with six countries and is positioned in a highly important location, connecting the African continent on all four points of the compass. The peace and stability of South Sudan is essential not only for the country itself; but also for the peace and stability in its neighboring countries, which leads to those of the whole Africa, as well as a crucial issue that should be dealt with by the international community. Based on the experiences gained through past UN PKO, the MOD/JSDF has contributed to the peace and stability of South Sudan by providing personnel cooperation in infrastructure development, which is highly expected by the UN.

UNMISS is the only UN PKO to which Japan currently dispatches its personnel and the dispatch of staff officers supports the progress of the peace process in South Sudan together with the international community. It is significant for Japan to continue dispatching its staff officers from the perspectives of maintaining close involvement in the UN, cooperation with neighboring African countries, and securing opportunities for human resource development.

See Part I, Chapter 3, Section 10-2 (Africa)

(2) Activities by Staff Officers and Others

As of the end of May 2026, four GSDF personnel (logistics, intelligence, engineering, and aviation operation staff officers) have been carrying out their duties at the UNMISS Headquarters located in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. The logistics staff officer procures and transports necessary supplies for UNMISS activities; the intelligence staff officer gathers, compiles, and analyzes information on public safety conditions; the engineering staff officer plans and proposes UNMISS engineering activities; and the aviation operation staff officer prepares flight plans for aircraft operated by UNMISS.

Additionally, one liaison staff member has been dispatched to the liaison office in the Embassy of Japan in South Sudan to support the activities of Japanese staff officers. This member liaises and coordinates with the South Sudan Government and the International Peace Cooperation Corps in South Sudan to ensure Japan's smooth and efficient cooperation with UNMISS.

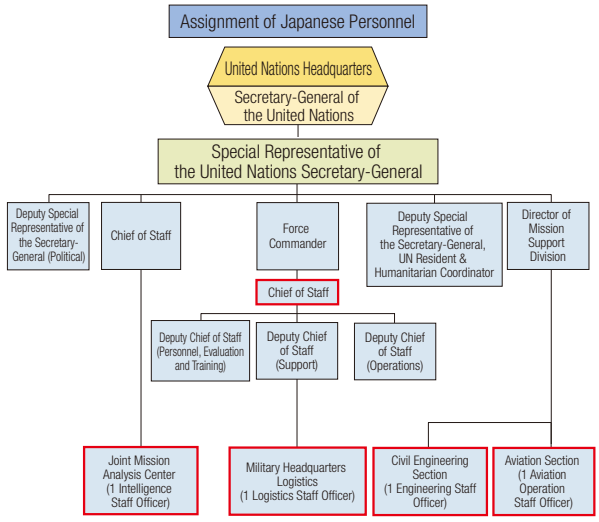
(3) Deployment of a GSDF Officer as UNMISS Military Component Chief of Staff

In May 2026, MOD/JSDF has dispatched a GSDF colonel as UNMISS Military Component Chief of Staff (a brigadier general-level post). Under the Force Commander and others, the Chief of Staff manages and controls the operations of various departments such as personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics, and planning at the force headquarters. This post represents the highest-ranking position ever held by a Japanese personnel deployed to UN PKO. While headquarters personnel below the Deputy Chief of Staff level are deployed as members of Japan's International Peace Cooperation Corps, the Chief of Staff was selected through an open recruitment process and dispatched as a UN staff member. This is the first case of "dispatch of Commander-level personnel" enable by the Peace and Security Legislation.

It is of great significance for JSDF personnel to fulfill the duties in the key and high-ranking position of Chief of Staff, as this enables Japan to make a leading contribution to international peace and help building a desirable security environment for Japan. Japan will continue to contribute to UNMISS activities.

See Fig. III-3-3-4 (Organizational Chart of UNMISS)

Fig. III-3-3-4 Organizational Chart of UNMISS



As of May 2026

(Note) Red lines indicate a department/division in which Japanese personnel are placed.

3 Dispatch of MOD Personnel to the UN Secretariat

The MOD/JSDF dispatches personnel to the UN Secretariat for the purpose of actively contributing to the UN efforts to achieve international peace and for the purpose of utilizing their experiences in Japan's PKO activities. As of March 2026, two JSDF personnel (unit chief level and action officer level) are involved in the military planning for UN peacekeeping missions and competency evaluation of personnel dispatched from various countries at the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO), and one JSDF personnel (action officer level) is working on the UN Triangular Partnership Programme[2] (UNTPP) at the UN Department of Operational Support (DOS).

See Reference 62 (Dispatch of Ministry of Defense Personnel to International Organizations)

4 Dispatch of Instructors to PKO Training Centers

To support the self-help efforts of African countries and others in PKO, the MOD/JSDF has dispatched JSDF personnel as instructors to PKO training centers in Africa and other countries that provide education and training for UN peacekeepers to contribute to peace and stability by enhancing the capacity of the centers.

See Reference 62 (Dispatch of Ministry of Defense Personnel to International Organizations)

5 Support to the UN Triangular Partnership Programme (UNTPP)

Japan has so far gained solid credibility in the fields of engineering and transport that are essential for promoting smooth peacekeeping operations. To continue to support the rapid deployment of peacekeeping missions and implement high quality activities, Japan expressed its active support at the PKO Summit in 2014 and it was embodied by the UNTPP.

The UNTPP was founded using funds from Japan as a program to support training for military engineers and the procurement of heavy equipment by the UN DOS. From the start of the program to March 2026, a total of 230 GSDF personnel have been dispatched to the African region to provide 12 training sessions for a total of 366 participants from 10 African countries.

In 2018, the UNTPP was extended to Asia and the surrounding area in light of the fact that 30% or more of PKO personnel were dispatched from Asia.

From the start of the program until March 2026, a total of 183 GSDF personnel were dispatched to provide a total of eight engineering training sessions for 151 personnel from 14 countries in Asia and the surrounding regions.

Additionally, given that strengthening medical capacity to ensure the safety of deployed personnel has become an issue in UN peacekeeping operations, Japan has dispatched a cumulative total of eight JSDF personnel (including medical officers) since 2019 as instructors to the UN Field Medical Assistants Course[3] (UNFMAC) established by the UN. Through March 2026, the personnel conducted a total of seven training sessions for 185 participants, including those from countries dispatching personnel.

REFERENCE: United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/kokusai_heiwa/pko/201111_ssd.html

2 A cooperative framework for training and providing necessary equipment for PKO personnel deployed to UN PKO through cooperation among the UN as well as countries dispatching the personnel and supporting UN PKO (third countries providing technology and equipment).

3 A course designed to train personnel to provide first aid in PKO areas of operations before specialized treatment is provided by medics or medical personnel.



Training conducted under the UNTPP framework

3 International Disaster Relief Activities

In recent years, the role of the military has become more diverse and opportunities to leverage military capabilities for Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) are growing. The JSDF has also been proactively engaged in international disaster relief activities from the viewpoint of humanitarian the contributions and improving the global security environment.

To this end, the JSDF maintains its readiness to take any necessary actions based on prepared disaster relief operation plans. The JSDF has proactively conducted international disaster relief activities in consultation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, leveraging its features and capabilities, while considering specific requests by the governments of affected countries and disaster situations.

The JSDF's international disaster relief activities encompass (1) medical services, such as first-aid medical treatment and epidemic prevention; (2) transportation of supplies, patients and personnel by helicopter and other means; (3) water supply activities using water-purifying devices; (4) cooperation in search and other activities by the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) fixed-wing patrol aircraft. In addition to such cooperation, (5) the JSDF may use transport aircraft and ships to carry disaster relief personnel and equipment to the affected area.

GSDF units including those of the Ground Component Command and regional Armies are always in readiness for such operations autonomously. The Self Defense Fleet of the MSDF and Air Support Command of the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) are always in readiness as well to transport personnel and their supplies to affected areas.

REFERENCE: International Disaster Relief Activities
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/kokusai_heiwa/kokusai_enjyo/

Section 4 Cooperation with the International Community as a Whole

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and missiles that can deliver them, as well as the proliferation of not only conventional arms but also goods and sensitive technologies of potential military use, pose a pressing challenge to the peace and stability of the international community. Moreover, many countries are working on the regulation of certain conventional weapons, considering the need to maintain a balance between humanitarian perspectives and defensive needs.

In order to deal with these issues, international frameworks for **arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation** have been developed, under which Japan has been playing an active role.

The National Security Strategy of Japan (NSS) describes arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, including for weapons of mass destruction, etc., as one of the key measures among efforts to strengthen a free and open international order. In addition, the National Defense Strategy (NDS) states that Japan will cooperate to improve the effectiveness of international organizations and multilateral export control regimes.

See Fig. III-3-4-1 (Framework for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Relating to Conventional Weapons, Weapons of Mass Destruction, Missiles and Related Materials, etc.)

Fig. III-3-4-1 Framework for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Relating to Conventional Weapons, Weapons of Mass Destruction, Missiles and Related Materials, etc.

Category	Weapons of Mass Destruction, etc.				Conventional Weapons
	Nuclear Weapons	Chemical Weapons	Biological Weapons	Delivery Systems (Missiles)	
Conventions on Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, etc.	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)	Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)	Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)	The Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOC)	Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Convention on Cluster Munitions Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Treaty) U.N. Register of Conventional Arms U.N. Report on Military Expenditures Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)
Export Control Frameworks Aimed at Non-Proliferation	Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)	Australia Group (AG)		Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)	Wassenaar Arrangement (WA)
New International Initiatives Aimed at Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction	Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540				

1 Initiatives Focused on Treaties Relating to Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Japan actively participates in international initiatives for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in regard to WMDs, in the form of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as missiles that can deliver them and associated technologies and materials.

Japan has contributed to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) by offering its knowledge in the field of chemical protection since the negotiating stage. Following the entry of the CWC into force, Japan has dispatched eight Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) experts on protection against chemical weapons to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which was established to continuously implement verification measures. As small quantities of the chemical substances subject to the regulation of the CWC are synthesized to be used for research on protection at the GSDF Chemical School, the school has submitted annual reports and undergone inspections 13 times in total, in accordance with the CWC regulations, since

the establishment of the OPCW, and it has been confirmed that there is no problem. Certified as an OPCW Designated Laboratory[1] in August 2024, the school contributes to further improving the security environment through arms control and disarmament, acquiring chemical-weapons-related expertise and enhancing Japan's international standing, and strengthening Japan's deterrence capabilities by obtaining analytical capabilities that meet international standards.

Moreover, Japan is also working on projects to destroy abandoned chemical weapons in China, based on the CWC.[2] The Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces (MOD/JSDF) has seconded personnel to the Cabinet Office to be in charge of these projects. Since 2000, GSDF personnel with expertise in chemicals and ammunition have been dispatched to conduct excavation and recovery projects 22 times in total (as of March 2026).

In addition, MOD officials have been dispatched to major conferences such as those of the Wassenaar Arrangement,[3] the Australia Group (AG), and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which are international export control regimes, and have made proposals in order to contribute to non-proliferation of key technologies from security perspectives. Moreover, Japan has been cooperating to enhance the effectiveness of regulations and decisions, such as by dispatching JSDF personnel to training conducted by the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO).

Japan has concluded various conventions on the regulation of conventional weapons such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), based on humanitarian perspectives and security needs. In addition, Japan has signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions (Oslo Convention)[4], which was adopted outside the framework of the CCW. Following the entry of this Convention, the disposal of all cluster munitions possessed by the JSDF was completed in February 2015.

In addition, the MOD/JSDF dispatches its personnel to the Group of Governmental Experts meetings related to Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) and other events as necessary under the CCW framework. Discussions related to LAWS are underway considering their characteristics, human involvement, international law and other perspectives. Japan will continue to actively and constructively engage in the development of international rules, while taking national security considerations into account.

Additionally, international discussions about the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the military domain have been intensifying in recent years. Following the meetings related to "Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (REAIM)," for which the first summit was held in 2023, the MOD also dispatched personnel to the second summit in 2024 and the third summit in 2026.

Regarding the prohibition of anti-personnel mines, Japan has actively cooperated in the initiatives of the international community that focus on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines by submitting annual reports that include data on Japan's exceptional stocks to the U.N. Secretary-General through the Secretariat of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Treaty)[5].

Japan has also submitted an annual Confidence-Building Measures report in relation to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and reported on the facilities of the National Defense Medical College and the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) in that report.

In addition, the MOD/JSDF has provided an annual report in accordance with the UN Register of Conventional Arms, the UN Report on Military Expenditures and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)[6], which aim to increase the transparency of military readiness and military expenditure. Regarding the U.N. Register of Conventional Arms, the MOD/JSDF also dispatches personnel as needed to Group of Governmental Experts meetings and other meetings set for reviewing and improving these systems.

See Reference 62 (Dispatch of Ministry of Defense Personnel to International Organizations); Part I, Chapter 3, 10 (Other Initiatives)

1 Refers to laboratories that conduct analytical investigations of samples collected by OPCW inspectors in cases involving suspected use of chemical weapons (including the analysis, verification, and reporting of samples such as soil, water, metal fragments, and biological materials collected from areas where the use of chemical weapons is suspected), thereby supporting the OPCW verification system.

2 Abandoned chemical weapons from the former Japanese army have been confirmed in wide-ranging areas from Heilongjiang Province in northern China to Guangdong Province in southern China, and Japan has been promoting excavation, recovery, and destruction projects in various regions.

3 An export control regime for the non-proliferation of conventional weapons.

4 The United States, China, Russia and others as major producers and holders of cluster munitions have not yet concluded the Convention.

5 A convention prohibiting the use, production, transfer, etc. of anti-personnel mines. The United States, China, Russia, the Republic of Korea (ROK), India and others have not yet concluded the Convention on anti-personnel landmines. The United States, China, Russia, the ROK, India and others have not yet concluded the Convention.

6 A treaty regulating the international transfer of conventional weapons that could be used to undermine peace and security or commit serious violations of international humanitarian law and other laws. The United States, Russia and others have not yet concluded the Treaty.

2 International Initiatives Aimed at Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

Deeply concerned about the development of WMDs and missiles by countries such as North Korea and Iran, the United States announced its Proliferation Security Initiative[7] (PSI) in 2003 and sought the participation of other countries therein. Various initiatives are being undertaken based on PSI, including PSI interdiction exercises and the like aimed at improving the ability to thwart the proliferation of WMDs and related items, and meetings to consider issues related to policies and legislation.

The MOD/JSDF collaborates with relevant organizations and countries, dispatching MOD officials including uniformed JSDF personnel to various meetings, as well as engaging in ongoing participation in these exercises.

In December 2025, the JSDF participated in the PSI maritime interdiction exercise[8] "Pacific Shield 25," hosted by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Through conducting drills on procedures related to the interdiction of the proliferation of WMDs and related items together with relevant agencies from participating countries, the exercise enhanced skills related to such activities, strengthened coordination with relevant Japanese agencies, and deepened mutual understanding with relevant agencies from participating countries.

Based on the proliferation cases in the areas surrounding Japan and from the perspectives of preventing the proliferation of WMDs and improving the response capability of the JSDF, the MOD/JSDF strives to strengthen non-proliferation frameworks including PSI, including by holding various relevant training exercises and meetings and participating in the same kind of activities which other countries hold.

See Reference 64 (Participation of MOD/JSDF in PSI Interdiction Exercise (Since FY2014)); Part I, Chapter 3, Section 11-3 (Transfer and Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs))

KEY WORD

Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Arms Control
Regulation and verification/inspection of armaments or weapons, confidence-building, regulation of transfers of conventional weapons, etc.

Disarmament
Reduction or elimination of specific armaments or weapons under international agreements

Non-Proliferation
Prevention of the proliferation of weapons that pose a threat to Japan and the international community (weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, as well as missiles and conventional weapons that carry such weapons) and related materials and technologies used in their development

REFERENCE: Initiatives for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/exchange/dialogue/fukakusan/index.html

7 An initiative that considers measures that participating countries can jointly take while complying with existing domestic and international laws in order to prevent the proliferation of WMDs/missiles as a threat to international peace and stability as well as their related materials and at the same time seeks to strengthen the relevant domestic laws of respective countries to the maximum possible extent.

8 A PSI exercise in the Indo-Pacific region has been hosted annually by six countries on a rotating basis since 2014: Japan, Australia, New Zealand, the ROK, Singapore and the United States.

3 Initiatives to Promote Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

1 What is Women, Peace and Security (WPS)?

Women, Peace and Security (WPS) is a concept that encapsulates the idea that peace is more sustainable when women take the lead and actively participate in all levels of conflict prevention, reconstruction, and peacebuilding, as well as disaster prevention, response and reconstruction, while recognizing the importance of protection and relief for women and girls, and those in need, as they are more vulnerable during conflicts and disasters.

In the 1990s, large-scale sexual violence in conflict as seen in former Yugoslavia, the civil war in Rwanda, and other conflicts drew worldwide attention. In addition, the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action was adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. Increasing the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protecting women living in situations of armed or other conflicts or under foreign occupation was stipulated as one of the key strategic objectives in the document. Furthermore, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court adopted in 1998 stipulated sexual violence in conflict as a war crime.

Against this international backdrop, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in 2000. This was the first Security Council Resolution focusing on the issues surrounding women in conflict. The resolution requires gender mainstreaming[9] in all efforts of its four pillars: Participation, Prevention, Protection, and Relief and Recovery. Since then, nine Security Council Resolutions related to WPS have been successively adopted, complementing UNSCR 1325. The efforts described in these ten resolutions are collectively referred to as the "WPS agenda."

In recent years, given increasing uncertainty in the international situation, the concept of WPS has increased in significance.

KEY WORD **Gender**

Gender refers to "the socially and culturally constructed differences that society attributes to sexes." While the term "sex" defines differences in biological and physiological characteristics acquired at birth, the term "gender" defines differences in socially and culturally constructed characteristics of the image of "a man" and of "a woman" commonly found in social norms and customs. These "socially and culturally constructed differences that society attributes to sexes" (genders) do not in themselves contain positive or negative values and are used internationally.

2 Japan's Initiatives

In 2015, Japan adopted its first National Action Plan to implement the Security Council Resolutions on WPS. The action plan has been since revised, and the WPS initiatives are currently progressing in line with the third National Action Plan, which was adopted in 2023.

A unique feature of Japan's National Action Plan is that it expands its scope to not only conflicts but also disasters. It is based on the experiences that Japan has overcome numerous large-scale natural disasters, such as the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, and has recognized the importance of incorporating a gender perspective into all stages of disaster prevention, disaster response, climate change, and reconstruction. The action plan prescribes not only international but also domestic initiatives and states that the ministries and agencies of Japan, including the MOD, will promote the appointment and participation of women in decision-making related to diplomacy, security, disaster prevention, and disaster response, and promote the development and implementation of policies and measures with gender perspectives.[10]

3 MOD/JSDF and WPS

(1) Rationales and Significance of Promoting WPS

Promoting WPS contributes to the protection of life, person, etc., of Japanese nationals and fundamental reinforcement of Japan's defense capabilities as well as international peace and stability. Thus, the MOD/JSDF must promote WPS.

First, specifically with regards to the protection of life, person, etc., of Japanese nationals, there are increased opportunities in recent years to conduct operations such as

9 Incorporating gender perspectives into all policies, measures and projects to achieve gender equality in all areas.

10 Focusing on differences arising from gender-based status and power relations to examine how such differences affect the formation of men's and women's immediate needs and long-term interests

the transportation of Japanese nationals overseas (TJNO), as well as tailored livelihood support for populations affected by disasters. In this context, the MOD/JSDF will directly protect the life, person, etc., of Japanese nationals by systematically responding to situations by incorporating gender perspectives based on the needs of women and girls.

Second, regarding the fundamental reinforcement of Japan's defense capabilities, the WPS Agenda includes the promotion of the participation of women in decision-making processes. This includes the field of security, and is closely related to the measures that the MOD has been taking to promote the active engagement of female personnel. Promoting WPS will produce an environment where diverse individuals, including women, can demonstrate their abilities. Diversity is also important for improving operational efficiency. Accordingly, promoting WPS is essential for fundamental reinforcement of Japan's defense capabilities as it will lead to the development of human resources and organizational capacity building in the MOD.

Third, with regards to contributing to international peace and stability, the "New Plan for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" was announced by then Prime Minister Kishida in 2023. Based on the idea that "the principles for peace and rules for prosperity are the backbone of FOIP," the plan clearly states the need for action from a WPS perspective in order to create an international environment where the weak are not beaten by force. WPS perspectives are essential to ensure more effective implementation of JSDF's overseas activities, including PKO and international disaster relief activities. As a responsible member of the international community, the MOD will also promote WPS and contribute to peace and stability, while cooperating with defense authorities of other countries pursuing respect for fundamental human rights and ensuring the rule of law.

(2) Recent Major Initiatives and Activities on WPS

a. Change of Mindset

In order to foster recognition of the MOD/JSDF as an active promoter of WPS and further expand the foundation for incorporating gender perspectives into operations and activities, the MOD/JSDF conducts recurring annual basic education and training on WPS for all personnel, from the Administrative Vice-Minister of Defense and the Chiefs of Staff to newly enlisted personnel, with the aim of ensuring that all personnel acquire WPS-related knowledge. In addition, efforts are being promoted to incorporate WPS-related lectures tailored to each organization into various educational courses, education/training for promotion to senior positions, and pre-deployment training for domestic and overseas assignments.

b. Structural Development

In 2023, the MOD/JSDF established the Headquarters for WPS Promotion in MOD, headed by the Parliamentary Vice-Ministers of Defense, in order to instill awareness of WPS and the significance of reflecting gender perspectives in policy planning and formulation among each member of personnel, while further strengthening initiatives to change the mindset of all JSDF personnel and for international cooperation.

The Headquarters for WPS Promotion in MOD has held five meetings to date. In particular, the MOD WPS Promotion Plan was formulated at the third meeting held in April 2024. Based on the Government of Japan's National Action Plan for WPS, the Promotion Plan established measures to be implemented within the MOD by FY2028 in four areas: (1) Change of Mindset, (2) Structural Development, (3) International Cooperation, and (4) Reflection of Gender Perspective in JSDF Activities. In March 2026, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense Wakabayashi convened the fifth meeting, in which participants discussed future directions for strategically promoting WPS and related initiatives.

From 2024 onward, Gender Advisors, who are responsible for advising and assisting senior leadership who play a leading role in promoting WPS initiatives, have been assigned to the MOD's Internal Bureau and Staff Offices. Additionally, in April 2025, the Office of International Cooperation on WPS was established in the MOD's Internal Bureau and the WPS Promotion Office was established in the Ground Staff Office. In addition, in order to incorporate gender perspectives into plans and missions related to unit operations, the MOD has been promoting the development of JSDF Gender Focal Points who support commanders of their assigned units and other organizations. As of May 2026, approximately 100 JSDF personnel and civilian officials had completed the training program.

c. International Cooperation

Since 2023, the MOD has incorporated WPS elements into frameworks for capacity building in the fields of PKO, HA/DR, and military medicine provided to Indo-Pacific region countries, while conducting WPS-related seminars and exchanges of views. Recent efforts include the incorporation of WPS elements into rescue exercises conducted as part of a 2025 HA/DR capacity building project for the Philippines, thereby strengthening cooperation with defense officials from various countries through WPS. Furthermore, in the second Japan-ASEAN WPS Cooperation Project held in July 2025, WPS practitioners affiliated with defense authorities and others from Timor-Leste, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, and Chile participated as observers in addition to ASEAN member states. Through advice provided by UN experts and multifaceted discussions, the project contributed to improving participants' awareness and understanding of the importance of incorporating WPS elements into HA/DR activities in the Indo-Pacific region.

In addition, within multilateral frameworks, WPS elements have been incorporated into the Cybersecurity Cooperation Program and the Ship Rider Cooperation Program conducted with ASEAN and Pacific Island countries, and exchanges of views and others are conducted with participants from various countries. Furthermore, within the ADMM-Plus

Experts' Working Groups on PKO and maritime security, for which Japan currently serves as co-chair together with the Philippines, activities are being promoted with WPS promotion as one of the primary objectives.

d. Reflection of Gender Perspective in JSDF Activities

Within Japan, the MOD/JSDF has been considering incorporating gender perspectives into MOD/JSDF strategies, policies, plans, in order to conduct JSDF activities more effectively. Specifically, based on knowledge gained through MOD/JSDF responses conducted from gender perspectives during large-scale natural disasters and similar situations, the MOD/JSDF has incorporated gender perspectives into the Ministry of Defense Disaster Management Operation Plan.

Moreover, the scope of Japan's disaster response goes beyond domestic disasters. In the event of a large-scale natural disaster in the Indo-Pacific region, Japan has conducted emergency humanitarian assistance activities including the dispatch of the Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Team. Disaster response by the JSDF can be expected both domestically and internationally. To comprehensively address these matters and ensure that all personnel can reliably conduct activities reflecting gender perspectives in various situations—including conflict situations, disaster relief operations, and domestic and overseas cases—a handbook aligned with international standards has been prepared.

e. Other Initiatives

Since the year 2025 marked the 25th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), which is the first Security Council resolution focusing on the issues surrounding women in conflict situations, commemorative WPS events were held both in Japan and abroad.

See Fig. III-3-4-2 (Contribution to WPS-Related Efforts by Key Partner Countries and International Organizations); Part V, Chapter 2, Section 2-4-2 (Promoting the Active Participation of Diverse Talent, Including Female Personnel)

Fig. III-3-4-2 Contribution to WPS-Related Efforts by Key Partner Countries and International Organizations



4 Ensuring Maritime Security

The NDS states that for Japan, a maritime nation, reinforcing the free and open maritime order and ensuring the freedom and safety of navigation and overflight are essential for peace and security.

To this end, the MOD/JSDF conducts various initiatives to promote maritime security cooperation to realize the vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) together with coastal states in the Indo-Pacific region.

See Part I, Chapter 3, Section 11-2 (Maritime Trends)

(1) Initiatives toward Ensuring Maritime Security

a. The Fundamental Idea of the Government

The NSS states that, as a maritime nation, Japan will work with its ally, like-minded countries and others to promote efforts to ensure the freedoms of navigation and overflight and to ensure safety, as well as maintain and develop the international maritime order based on universal values, including the rule of law. The NSS specifically mentions promotion of maritime surveillance, joint training and exercises with other countries and overseas port calls, as well as the implementation of counter-piracy and information gathering activities.

Furthermore, the NSS states that Japan will ensure

REFERENCE: MOD Website: Initiatives on Women, Peace and Security (WPS)
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/wps/index.html

freedoms of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea and other waters, promote peaceful settlement of disputes based on international law, strengthen relations with coastal states along the sea lines of communication, actively utilize the Arctic sea route and continue to actively utilize the JSDF facility in Djibouti and address other things.

The fourth Basic Plan on Ocean Policy, approved by the Cabinet[11] in April 2023, continues to take a broad view on ocean policy from the perspective of maritime security. It promotes government-wide efforts for "comprehensive maritime security." Therefore, it also promotes measures necessary for the "maintenance and development of an international maritime order," mainly through Japan's own efforts to "secure our national interests in our country's territorial waters" and by strengthening ties with our ally, like-minded countries and others.

Concerning the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), which China and ASEAN are continuing to discuss, Japan has stated its position that the COC should be effective, substantive, consistent with international law including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and respect the legitimate rights and interests of all stakeholders that make use of the South China Sea.

b. Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF

The MOD/JSDF is conducting counter-piracy operations to ensure stable use of sea lines of communication and information gathering activities to ensure the safety of Japan-related vessels in the Middle East. In addition, the MOD/JSDF has also taken opportunities to appeal to the international community on the importance of strengthening the international maritime order and freedom of navigation and has been consistently appealing to ensure the "rule of law" in maritime areas, which are essential to human prosperity. In particular, regarding the ongoing unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts in the East China Sea and the disputes surrounding the South China Sea, the MOD/JSDF emphasizes the importance of all parties making efforts towards the peaceful resolution of these disputes based on international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

See Chapter 1, Section 1-2-7 (1) (Counter-Piracy Operations); Chapter 1, Section 1-2-7 (2) (Information Gathering Activities for Ensuring the Safety of Japan-related Vessels in the Middle East); Part I, Chapter 3, Section 11-2-2 (National Maritime Security Initiatives)

(2) Cooperation in Maritime Security

The fourth Basic Plan on Ocean Policy states that maritime security cooperation with other countries will be strengthened through bilateral and multilateral security dialogue and defense exchanges among defense authorities at various levels to maintain and develop the "free and open ocean."

In response to this, the MOD/JSDF has been working on cooperation for maritime security within regional security dialogue frameworks such as the ADMM-Plus and the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM-MS) and is co-chairing with the Philippines the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security from 2024 to 2027.

In addition, the MOD/JSDF provides capacity building for maritime security to the Indo-Pacific coastal states,[12] helping them improve their Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) capabilities and strengthening cooperation with the ally and like-minded countries in maritime security.

In cooperation with the navies and other stakeholders in the Indo-Pacific region, the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) conducts maritime security training with the navies and police forces, etc. of coastal states in the same region. In particular, the Pacific Island countries have an urgent need to strengthen their maritime security capabilities due to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing[13] and crime at sea. As part of the MSDF Indo-Pacific Deployment (IPD25), the MSDF dispatched a Boarding Inspection Team to Pacific Island countries, where it conducted Boarding Inspection Exercises and related activities.

In addition to the counter-piracy operations, the Deployment Surface Force for Counter Piracy Enforcement (DSPE) and Deployment Air Force for Counter Piracy Enforcement (DAPE) promote defense exchanges with the forces of other countries deployed in Djibouti. Furthermore, they call at ports in Middle Eastern coastal states and conduct bilateral/multilateral exercises with the EUNAVFOR and other forces to improve tactical skills and strengthen cooperation with the armed forces of each country.

Strengthening cooperation with coastal states of the Indo-Pacific region through such defense exchanges and cooperation contributes to maintaining maritime security, which has extremely high significance.

See Part I, Chapter 3, Section 11-2 (Maritime Trends); Reference 61 (Participation in Multilateral Exercises (FY2022 and Beyond))

11 This plan is formulated by the government of Japan to comprehensively and systematically promote measures for the oceans and is reviewed approximately every five years.

12 To date, the MOD/JSDF has provided capacity building on maritime security to Indonesia, Viet Nam, the Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Brunei and Sri Lanka.

13 Fishing activities which do not comply with the domestic laws of each country or international operation rules, including unauthorized, unreported, or falsely reported operations; proscribed operations by stateless fishing vessels, fishing vessels from countries that are not members of regional fisheries management organizations; or similar operations, posing a serious threat to the sustainable use of marine resources and directly affecting food security.

Chapter 4 Initiatives to Live in Harmony with Local Communities and the Environment

Implementing various activities of the Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces (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.

Section 1 Measures to Harmonize with Local Communities

The National Defense Strategy (NDS) of Japan provides that in order to enable the JSDF and the U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) to conduct activities seamlessly and effectively on a daily basis, the MOD will strive to gain the understanding and cooperation of local governments and local residents in the areas around the JSDF and the U.S. Forces facilities.

To this end, the MOD/JSDF will actively engage in public relations activities on a regular basis regarding the policies and activities of the MOD/JSDF, and also the roles of the USFJ, and coordinate in accordance with requests from local communities and evolving circumstances, while fulfilling accountability. Furthermore, the MOD/JSDF will continue to promote measures to improve the living environment of areas around defense facilities, including noise pollution, from the perspective of promoting cooperation for the defense of Japan.

Moreover, in some regions, the existence of JSDF units themselves is a major contribution to the communities' maintenance and vitalization, and in other regions the JSDF's emergency patient transportation supports community healthcare, so in conducting unit abolition and reorganization and establishing as well as administering camps and bases, the MOD/JSDF will give due consideration to regional characteristics as well so as to gain the understanding of local governments and local residents.

1 Supporting Civilian Life

The MOD/JSDF conducts activities to support the lives of citizens in a range of fields, in response to requests from local governments and relevant organizations. Such activities not only further deepen the trust in the JSDF but also provide pride and confidence for JSDF personnel.

The Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) handles the disposal of unexploded ordnance and other dangerous explosives found throughout Japan. In FY2025, there were 1,655 such cases (approximately 37.4 tons). In particular, cases handled in Okinawa Prefecture accounted for approximately 28% of the total number of cases. The MSDF clears and disposes of underwater mines and other dangerous explosives. In FY2025, there were 122 pieces (approximately 0.5 tons) handled.

Furthermore, the MOD/JSDF supports regional medical treatment efforts by providing general medical care at some JSDF hospitals[1] and the National Defense Medical College Hospital as well as conducting urgent transport for emergency patients from isolated islands, and in addition it provides support for transport and other services in athletic events, such as the National Sports Festival. In addition, at commemorative and other events held at local camps and



REFERENCE: Cooperation between the MOD and local communities
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/chouwa/sesaku/index.html



REFERENCE: Subsidies and Grants
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/chouwa/sesaku/hojokin_jigyo.html

1 As of March 31, 2025, the JSDF hospitals that provide general medical care include JSDF Central Hospital, JSDF Sapporo Hospital, JSDF Sendai Hospital, JSDF Iruma Hospital, JSDF Yokosuka Hospital, JSDF Fuji Hospital, JSDF Hanshin Hospital, and JSDF Fukuoka Hospital.

bases, the MOD/JSDF seeks to interact with local residents by opening its camps and bases to the public to the extent that they do not interfere with the activities of the units.

Furthermore, when engaging in transactions with local companies, the MOD/JSDF promotes various measures in line with national and other policies[2] that contribute to the local economy by ensuring opportunities for local small and medium-sized enterprises to receive orders while taking efficiency into account. Such measures include the promotion of separated/divided ordering,[3] ensuring competition among companies within the same qualification and grade divisions,[4] and the introduction of the open counter method[5] and other methods.

See Reference 65 (Activities in Civic Life)



MSDF personnel disposing of unexploded ordnance discovered at Tokuyama-Kudamatsu Port in Shunan City, Yamaguchi Prefecture (March 2026)

2 Cooperation from Local Governments and Other Relevant Organizations for the JSDF

(1) Cooperation on Recruitment of Uniformed JSDF Personnel and Re-Employment Support

Amid the harsh recruitment and employment environment, cooperation from local governments and relevant organizations is essential to secure highly qualified personnel and to support the re-employment of uniformed JSDF personnel who retire at relatively young ages.

(2) Support for and Cooperation with JSDF Activities

The JSDF camps and bases maintain close relations with local communities, and therefore, understanding, support and cooperation from the people of the local communities are indispensable for the JSDF to conduct its activities, including education and training, and disaster relief operations. Units dispatched overseas for international peace cooperation assignments and other duties receive support and cooperation from the relevant local organizations for the procedures involved.

The MOD/JSDF is cooperating with relevant entities such as local governments, police, and fire services in peacetime in order to ensure immediate and reliable JSDF activities in various contingencies.

3 Measures for Obtaining the Understanding and Cooperation of Local Governments and Local Residents

Regional Defense Bureaus established in eight locations nationwide make efforts to build cooperative relationships with their respective local communities, through collaboration with JSDF units and Provincial Cooperation Offices. In FY2025, the bureaus provided local communities with explanations on a variety of training and exercises, including Japan-U.S. bilateral exercises, the temporary deployment of the U.S. Navy UAV MQ-9B to Misawa Air Base (Aomori Prefecture), commencement of the transfer of U.S. Marine Corps personnel stationed in Okinawa to Guam, etc. In addition, in order to promote understanding of Japan's defense policy in general, seminars on defense issues were held for local residents and explanations regarding the Defense White Paper were provided to local governments and other organizations.

See Fig. III-4-1-1 (Initiatives Implemented by Regional Defense Bureaus and Other Organizations)

2 "Basic Policy Regarding Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises on Contracts with the Government, etc., in FY2026" (Cabinet decision on April 21, 2026)
3 For example, this is a method in which grouping of products, etc., takes place when the order is put up for general competitive bidding before a successful bidder is determined for each group.
4 This means that out of the bidding participation eligibility categorized into grade A-D, there is competition between grade C or D only, which comprise mostly small and medium enterprises.
5 A method in which the ordering party publicly announces the procurement details, etc., without specifying the counterparty and solicits quotations from a wide range of interested parties.



Activity of a Regional Defense Bureau (October 2025)

Fig. III-4-1-1 Initiatives Implemented by Regional Defense Bureaus and Other Organizations

1 Measures concerning coordination with local governments for smoothly implementing projects

Coordination with local governments regarding the reorganization, etc., of JSDF units and training, etc., of the U.S. Forces

2 Measures concerning responses to incidents and accidents wherein the JSDF, etc., are involved

Required cooperation in collaboration with the JSDF, etc., such as information provision to local governments

3 Measures for the purpose of taking effective actions for various contingencies

Required support for those such as JSDF units and local governments under large-scale disasters or other events and participation in training

4 Measures with the aim of obtaining understanding of the defense policy in general

Holding of sessions to explain the content of Defense of Japan and seminars on defense issues, targeting local governments and residents

4 Measures to Promote Harmony between Defense Facilities and Surrounding Areas

1 Features of Defense Facilities[6] and Projects Related to Harmony with the Surrounding Areas

(1) Measures around Defense Facilities

Defense facilities are diverse in their use, and often require large volumes of land. In addition, as of January 1, 2026, approximately 29% of the land area and 30 of the 76 facilities and areas (for exclusive use) of the USFJ are jointly used by the JSDF in accordance with the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement, with the purpose of enhancing the diversity and efficiency of Japan-U.S. bilateral training and exercises. Meanwhile, problems related to restricted establishment and operations of defense facilities have emerged due to the urbanization of areas around many of the defense facilities. Another problem is that frequent aircraft operations such as takeoffs and landings cause noise and other issues, impacting the living environment of local residential communities.

Defense facilities are indispensable as the foundation that supports the defense capabilities of Japan and the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements. Therefore, in order for the facilities to exert their full function, it is necessary to maintain

6 Defense facilities are divided into JSDF facilities and USFJ facilities and areas. They are used as training areas, air bases, ports, etc.

the conditions for their constant and stable utilization by ensuring harmony between the defense facilities and the surrounding areas and by obtaining the understanding and cooperation of local residents.

For that purpose, to date the MOD has taken measures to mitigate aircraft noise and other impacts caused by activities of the JSDF or the USFJ, or by the existence/operations of airfields and other defense facilities in the surrounding areas based on the Living Environment Improvement Act,[7] etc. For example, subsidies are provided for the development of facilities for stabilizing the everyday lives of residents,[8] such as public facilities and facilities for use in agriculture and fisheries, while Specified Defense Facilities[9] Environment Improvement Adjustment Grants are given to municipalities around defense facilities that have particularly significant impact on the living environment. Specified Defense Facilities Environment Improvement Adjustment Grants are utilized not only for the development of facilities but also for so-called "soft projects" such as aid for medical expenses.

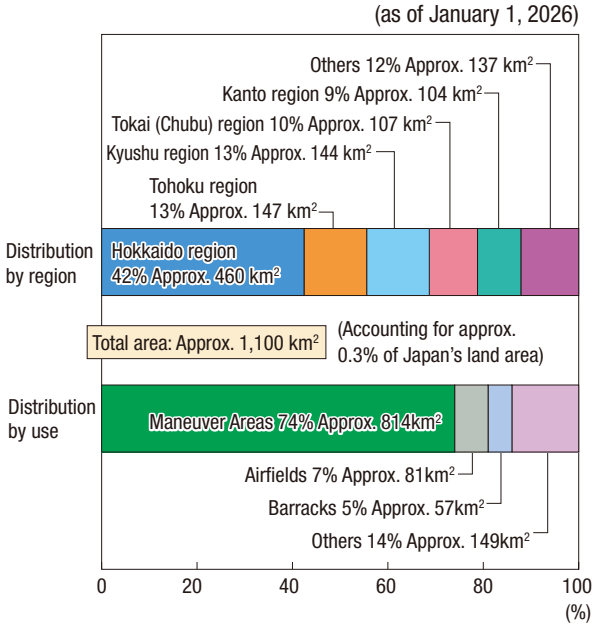
In recent years, in order to respond with precision to the operational modes of specified defense facilities and their impact on surrounding areas, the criteria for the calculation of Specified Defense Facilities Environment Improvement Adjustment Grants was reviewed and Training Grants for training of the JSDF, the U.S. Forces, etc., at defense facilities other than specified defense facilities was established in view of the diversification of training, etc.

In 2026, the subsidy framework was revised to take into account the actual circumstances of the operation of the JSDF and its impact on the local area, including by further extending the subsidized projects for the development of facilities for stabilizing the everyday lives of residents, and making childcare support facilities and elderly support facilities eligible for subsidies, as such facilities could also be utilized as "welfare shelters" during disasters and the like.

In addition, with regard to noise insulation projects for housing, sequential review of the target areas, including Category I areas, will be conducted while also enhancing measures such as implementing noise insulation construction work for homes newly built in recent years and expanding the scope of noise insulation construction work from individual rooms to entire residences. In this way, in order to promote harmony between defense facilities and surrounding communities, consideration continues to be conducted on more effective measures that better reflect actual conditions, taking into account requests from local communities and other factors.

See Fig. III-4-1-2 (Status of JSDF Facilities (Land Plots)), Fig. III-4-1-3 (Status of Facilities and Areas of U.S. Forces in Japan (Exclusively Used Facilities)); Fig. III-4-1-4 (Joint Use Status of U.S. Forces in Japan Facilities/Areas (Dedicated Facilities) with the JSDF); Fig. III-4-1-5 (Costs for Measures in Areas Around Defense Facilities in FY2026 (Contracts Base)); Reference 66 (List of U.S. Forces Japan Facilities/Areas (including joint use facilities))

Fig. III-4-1-2 Status of JSDF Facilities (Land Plots)



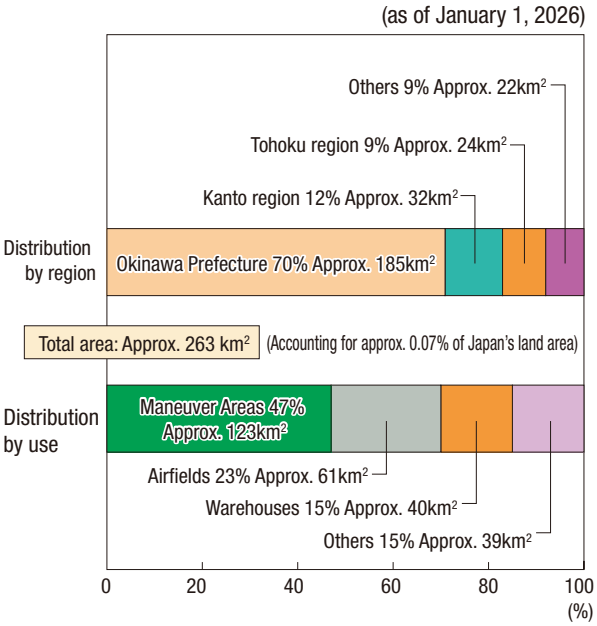
(Note) Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

7 Act on Improvement of Living Environment around Defense Facilities

8 Facilities that contribute to the stability of business management, such as parks, roads, gyms, community centers, garbage and human waste treatment facilities, and other living environment facilities, as well as facilities for use in agriculture and fisheries.

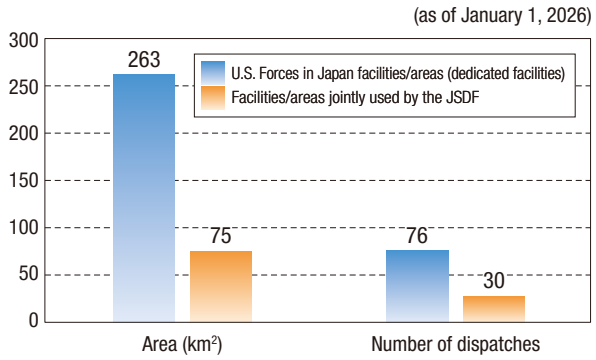
9 Defense facilities such as air bases where jets take off and land, training areas where shelling is carried out, ports, and other facilities whose establishment or operation has a significant impact on the living environment and development of the surrounding area.

Fig. III-4-1-3 Status of Facilities and Areas of U.S. Forces in Japan (Exclusively Used Facilities)



(Note) Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Fig. III-4-1-4 Joint Use Status of U.S. Forces in Japan Facilities/Areas (Dedicated Facilities) with the JSDF



(Note) Area figures are rounded.

Fig. III-4-1-5 Costs for Measures in Areas Around Defense Facilities in FY2026 (Contracts Base)

(Unit: 100 million yen)

Project	Mainland	Okinawa
Disturbance prevention projects	100	3
Noise prevention projects	678	154
Relocation measures work	55	2
Subsidized projects for stabilizing people's lives	439	203
Road repair, etc. work	63	26
Specified Defense Facilities Environment Improvement Adjustment Grants	233	40
Other projects	24	12



Waste treatment facility established under the measures to improve areas around defense facilities (Nago City, Okinawa Prefecture)

(2) Grants, etc., to Promote the USFJ Realignment

Before and after the implementation of USFJ realignment, Realignment Grants[10] are provided to help cover the expenses of projects that contribute to improving the quality of life of local residents and stimulate local industries.[11] These grants are provided in accordance with the progress of the realignment after the Defense Minister has designated the specified defense facilities and neighboring municipalities affected by the realignment.

As of April 2026, 11 municipalities affected by seven defense facilities are eligible to receive the Realignment Grants. In order to promote the USFJ realignment, additional measures are taken with budgetary provision.

See Reference 67 (Outline of Measures to Promote Harmony Between Defense Facilities and Surrounding Areas)

10 The amount allocated is approximately 5.3 billion yen in the FY2026 budget.

11 The specific scope of the projects is stipulated in Article 2 of the Enforcement Order of the Act on Special Measures concerning Smooth Implementation of Realignment of United States Forces in Japan as 14 projects, including projects related to the promotion of education, sports, and culture.

(3) Other Measures

a. Compensation for Fisheries

On the occasion of training, etc. carried out by the JSDF or the USFJ using the sea or other water surfaces, the MOD defines the water area which is confined for fisheries based on laws or a contract, and compensates for losses incurred from the restriction.

b. Base Grants, etc.

The MOD provides cooperation by doing such things as providing information regarding the grants for municipalities where national defense facilities are located ("Base Grants"), and the adjustment grants for municipalities where defense facilities are located ("Adjustment Grants"), both of which are defense facilities-related grants systems under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

The Base Grants were established in view of the fact that the facilities used by the U.S. Forces and the JSDF such as airports have a significant impact on the finances of municipalities. The grants are provided to municipalities as a substitute for fixed property tax.

The Adjustment Grants are provided to municipalities in view of the fact that the properties of the U.S. Forces are exempt from fixed property tax and U.S. military personnel and others are exempt from municipal tax, etc.

2 Efforts to Develop Understanding and Cooperation Concerning the Stationing of the USFJ

Amid the increasingly severe security environment surrounding Japan, maintaining the presence of the USFJ and its readiness is vitally important for ensuring the security of Japan. In order to station the USFJ seamlessly, it is essential to obtain the understanding and cooperation of local governments and residents in the vicinity of U.S. Forces facilities, and therefore, it is necessary to undertake various efforts in this regard.

(1) Coordination with Local Governments, etc., for Unit Operations of the USFJ

The MOD is working to promote understanding among local communities regarding maintaining U.S. Forces facilities in Japan and unit operations by providing prior explanation to the relevant local governments and residents in implementing efforts such as the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan, conducting training by USFJ, deploying military units or new assets.

(2) Ensuring the Safety of Local Residents and Other People

Ensuring the safety of local residents is a fundamental prerequisite for USFJ activities. The Government has been fully communicating its approach to the U.S. side, including at summit and ministerial levels, with the two countries cooperating to ensure the safety of the local residents as a top priority.

In the event of a crash or missing parts, etc., of a U.S. military aircraft, the MOD requests the United States to promptly provide information and adopt rigorous measures for safety management and recurrence prevention. The MOD then promptly explains the obtained information to the relevant local governments, etc., and adopts measures to ensure prompt and appropriate compensation for the damage incurred.

In addition, Japan and the United States have established guidelines[12] for aircraft accidents and will take prompt and appropriate action in response to the situation in the scenario of a crash of a U.S. military aircraft outside of the facilities and areas of the U.S. Forces within Japan.

Moreover, with regard to accidents/incidents caused by the consumption of alcohol by U.S. military personnel, etc., the MOD has requested the U.S. side on multiple occasions to tighten discipline, prevent recurrence, and conduct personnel education.

The USFJ, for its part, is taking countermeasures such as revising the guidelines for off-duty activities (liberty policy), including imposing curfews, and imposing restrictions on the consumption of alcohol in public places on soldiers in all of the services, among others. It is important for the U.S. side to steadily implement these kinds of measures to prevent recurrence of accidents/incidents.

(3) Promoting Exchange between the USFJ and Local Residents

The MOD holds a Japan-U.S. exchange program to deepen mutual understanding between Japan and the United States with the support of local governments and U.S. Forces personnel. Under the program, residents living near USFJ facilities and areas together with USFJ personnel enjoy sports, music and cultural exchanges.

The USFJ also has initiatives to deepen mutual understanding with people of the local communities, which include opening up of its bases (Friendship day) and information provision through websites and social media.

12 Guidelines regarding Off-Base U.S. Military Aircraft Accidents in Japan.



Exchange between the U.S. Forces and local residents (FY2025 Japan-U.S. Joint Concert) (January 2026)

3 Participation in National Events

The JSDF holds ceremonies, including guards of honor, line-ups, and gun salutes, for the Emperor, state guests, and others at national events. In particular, a guard of honor ceremony for state guests of foreign countries held at their welcome reception is essential for diplomatic procedure.

4 Cooperation for Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan

The MOD/JSDF conducted necessary cooperation at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. In July 2025, the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) conducted demonstration flights by Blue Impulse, performing flights over the Yumeshima venue as well as other locations throughout Osaka Prefecture. In August of the same year, the GSDF Middle Army Band performed three concerts at the EXPO Hall within the venue, contributing to exchange with visitors. In October of the same year, the United Nations Information Centre and the Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters of the Cabinet Office jointly organized a lecture at the United Nations Pavilion featuring JSDF personnel who had served with the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS). The participants introduced international peace cooperation activities based on their firsthand experience in the field.



Blue Impulse performing a demonstration flight over the Expo venue (July 2025)

5 Cooperation for the Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition

The JSDF has been dispatching MSDF icebreakers for the scientific research in Antarctica conducted by the Japanese government since 1965, when the research was resumed, and it has been providing transportation for personnel and supplies and other cooperation using the second-generation icebreaker JS Shirase since 2009.

In 2025, the MSDF marked the 60th anniversary of its cooperation for the Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition. Amidst this, for the 67th Antarctic Research Expedition from November 2025 to April 2026, the JSDF provided personnel transportation for 130 people on the round-trip voyage, transported approximately 1,080 tons of supplies to the site, and provided support for sea and land observations and base construction.

See Reference 68 (Achievements of Antarctic Research Expedition)



Icebreaker JS Shirase

6 Civil Engineering Consignments from Third Parties

The JSDF receives consignments of civil engineering projects, etc., conducted by the state and local governments when the projects conform to the purpose of its training. The GSDF, since its establishment, has received 8,273 consignments of civil engineering projects from third parties, and it is contributing to local disaster prevention countermeasures, etc. and strengthening cooperation with local communities through these activities.

See Reference 69 (External Construction Project Achievements)

5 Other Initiatives

1 Response to Laser Irradiation and Kite Flying toward JSDF and U.S. Forces Aircraft

Cases involving laser irradiation and flying kites that interfere with JSDF and U.S. Forces aircraft during flight are extremely dangerous and malicious acts that could impair a pilot's ability to operate the aircraft, which could result in a catastrophe such as a plane crash. Therefore, the MOD works closely with relevant local governments to disseminate information regarding the risks involved in these interference acts by putting up posters and requesting to report to the police.

Such interference is regulated under the Civil Aeronautics Act, and violations are subject to fines and other penalties.

2 Response to Flight Activities over Defense Facilities and Surrounding Airspace, including Small Unmanned Aerial Systems

In recent years, terrorist incidents and attempted terrorist incidents using drones, including commercial drones, have occurred in many countries, some of which have targeted military facilities. In Japan, due to the possibility of terrorist attacks using drones against JSDF facilities and U.S. Forces facilities/areas in Japan, "the amended Act on Prohibition of Flight of UASs" came into effect in 2019, to prohibit small drones, etc. from flying over and around JSDF facilities and USFJ facilities/areas designated by the Defense Minister. Based on this Act, as of April 1, 2026, 349 JSDF facilities, where major command headquarters and other facilities are located, and 63 USFJ facilities/areas have been designated as target facilities.

3 Response to the Act on the Review and Regulation of the Use of Real Estate[13] and Other Acts

In line with the National Security Strategy formulated in 2013, which called for Japan to review issues related to the use of land in locations such as the areas surrounding defense facilities from the standpoint of the national security of Japan, the MOD has conducted research since FY2013 on the status of land ownership in areas adjacent to defense facilities.

Under the Act on the Review and Regulation of the Use of Real Estate Surrounding Important Facilities and on Remote Territorial Islands fully enforced in 2022, the Cabinet Office designates areas surrounding facilities that are important for national security ("important facilities"[14]) and areas within remote territorial islands as "monitored areas"[15] or "special monitored areas,"[16] and conducts a review of the status of use of land and buildings in these areas. If the Cabinet Office finds that the real estate in those areas is used for any acts that impede the functions of important facilities and remote

REFERENCE: Act on Prohibition of Flight of UASs
(i) List of target defense-related facilities of JSDF:
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/presiding/law/drone/list.html
(ii) List of target defense-related facilities of USFJ:
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/presiding/law/drone/list_zaibeigun.html

13 Act on the Review and Regulation of the Use of Real Estate Surrounding Important Facilities and on Remote Territorial Islands
14 Defense facilities (JSDF and USFJ facilities in Japan), facilities of the Japan Coast Guard, and facilities supporting public.
15 Areas within a range of approximately 1,000 m from the important facilities or areas within the remote territorial islands, if it is particularly necessary to prevent the land and buildings in those areas from being used for adverse acts.
16 In the monitored areas, functions of important facilities or the remote territorial islands are of particular importance or are vulnerable, and cannot be easily substituted by other important facilities or the remote territorial islands.

territorial islands (adverse acts) or that there is a clear risk that it will be used for them, it recommends or orders the real estate user to prevent the adverse acts.

Regarding defense facilities (the facilities of the JSDF and the USFJ), 397 locations have been designated in the public notice so far, and the Cabinet Office published the status of acquisition of real estate within areas of FY2024[17] in December 2025.

This Act has major significance from the perspective of ensuring that defense facilities are able to function properly. The MOD will cooperate with the Cabinet Office to adopt the appropriate measures in this regard.

4 Initiatives to Increase Consumption of Marine Products

As a consequence of the release of ALPS-treated water[18] from Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station into the ocean in 2023, China and others enacted measures such as strengthening regulations on imports of marine products from Japan. In light of this, in order to support the Japanese fishery industry, the government presented the Protection of the Fishery Industry package. The MOD/JSDF is actively supporting the expansion of domestic seafood consumption.

5 Support for Activities to Prevent Bear-Related Damage in Akita Prefecture

In response to serious damage caused by Asian black bears in Akita Prefecture, and a request from the Governor of Akita Prefecture for the JSDF to provide support for bear capture operations, the GSDF conducted activities, including transporting box traps and conducting information gathering using drones from November 5 to November 30, 2025.

As the primary missions of the MOD/JSDF are national defense, such activities cannot be conducted without limitation. However, under that premise and taking into account the exceptional nature of the situation, MOD/JSDF provided support as an exception.

Going forward, measures to prevent bear-related damage will be implemented based on the "Policy Package for Bear-Related Damage Countermeasures" compiled by the Government of Japan as a whole. The MOD/JSDF will cooperate from the perspective of securing hunters, by providing information to former JSDF personnel and others.

17 In FY2024, the total amount of real estate acquired within all 583 designated areas, including areas surrounding defense facilities, was 113,827 parcels out of which 3,498 parcels (3.1% of the total) were acquired by foreign nationals (persons who possess foreign nationalities and habitually reside in Japan and those believed to be foreign nationals residing outside of Japan) or foreign entities (foreign entities and domestic entities represented by persons possessing foreign nationalities or those believed to be foreign nationals residing outside of Japan). However, the results of the FY2024 review cannot be directly compared with those of FY2023 because many of the real estate transactions in designated areas within major metropolitan areas were excluded from the scope of the FY2023 review.

18 Contaminated water containing radioactive substances, generated at the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, which has been purified until the regulatory standards are met.

Section 2 Responding to Climate Change and Environmental Issues

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the average global temperature in 2025 exceeded the pre-industrial 1850-1900 baseline by 1.43°C. The period from 2015 to 2025 was the warmest 11-year period on record, with the loss of glacier ice, rising sea levels, accelerated ocean warming, and extreme weather events causing major damage to societies and economies around the world.

Regarding the response to climate change and other environmental issues, countries around the world have been making efforts on this front following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the UN and the Paris Agreement, an international framework on climate change, in 2015.

Japan is also advancing specific climate change measures based on various plans formulated under the Basic Act on the Environment, the Climate Change Adaptation Act, and the Act on Promotion of Global Warming Countermeasures.

Furthermore, it has been pointed out that climate change will also cause heavy rains, droughts, and increases in the proportion of high-intensity tropical cyclones, as well as other problems that will destroy houses and infrastructure, cause loss of properties and livelihoods, and affect food and water security, and therefore increase the likelihood of conflict. Climate change will also affect military equipment, infrastructure, and operations themselves.

In July 2024, NATO released the Secretary General's annual Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment. In addition to the impact of climate change on each operational domain, the report noted that military conflict is a significant factor in climate change and environmental destruction and addressed the climate impact of Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

In response to this acceleration of domestic and overseas efforts, the Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces (MOD/JSDF) also needs to respond to various climate change and environmental issues and contribute to their resolution while implementing measures with a greater focus on the coexistence of JSDF/USFJ facilities/areas with the surrounding areas.

In addition, the issue of climate change will have an even greater impact on future MOD/JSDF operations, various plans, facilities, and equipment, as well as on the security environment surrounding Japan, including responses to future energy shifts, all of which must be addressed in an appropriate manner.

1 Initiatives of the MOD/JSDF

To date, the MOD/JSDF has complied with the laws and regulations related to the environment and strived to be thorough in protecting the environment and to reduce the burden on the environment. It has promoted initiatives related to the environment under the "Policy of the Ministry of Defense on Consideration for the Environment" which presented the mindsets of the personnel, environmental measures, and so on. 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.

1 The Ministry of Defense's Response Strategy on Climate Change

The recognition of climate change as a security issue is growing among defense organizations globally, including the UN Security Council. The MOD extensively studies the impact of climate change on Japan's national security, and formulated the Ministry of Defense's Response Strategy on Climate Change in 2022. The same strategy has set forth 10 specific measures that the MOD should promote going forward in order to appropriately adapt and respond to the direct and indirect effects of climate change in the future. The MOD/JSDF will promote measures aimed at addressing climate change while maintaining and reinforcing Japan's defense capabilities in line with the strategy.

REFERENCE: Initiatives Concerning Environmental Measures
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/policy/agenda/meeting/kikouhendou/pdf/taishosenryaku_202208.pdf

REFERENCE: The Ministry of Defense's Response Strategy on Climate Change
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/chouwa/kankyo_taisaku/index.html

Based on the same strategy, in June 2024 the MOD formulated a roadmap focused on the long term until 2050 and it is promoting a range of initiatives in a strategic and systematic manner.

Furthermore, in accordance with the same strategy, government aircraft, ASDF fighter aircraft, and other aircraft have started using Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).[1]

2 Procuring Renewable Energy Electricity

As the largest consumer of electricity among government institutions, the MOD/JSDF, which has approximately 250,000 JSDF personnel and operates various equipment and facilities nationwide, has been actively promoting the procurement of electricity generated by renewable energy sources (hereinafter "renewable energy electricity") for the MOD/JSDF facilities since FY2020 in order to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and other goals.

3 Balancing the Promotion of Renewable Energy Introduction and Security

The introduction of renewable sources of energy, including wind power, is being promoted in response to the issue of climate change, and wind power generation facilities are expected to increase moving forward. Depending on the location and specifications of these wind power generation facilities, they may potentially impact the activities of the JSDF and USFJ, for example, by interfering with the operations of the warning and control radars making it difficult to detect aircraft and missiles, etc. Accordingly, the MOD/JSDF is advancing measures to balance the promotion of renewable energy introduction and security by conducting detailed coordination with relevant stakeholders, including business operators, from the early stages of project planning, as well as through the operation of systems based on the Act for Adjustment Between Defense and Wind Power,[2] which entered into force in March 2025.

4 Response to PFAS[3]

With regard to efforts related to PFAS, the MOD/JSDF completed the replacement and disposal of aqueous film-forming foam containing PFOS at all JSDF facilities by the end of September 2025. By March 2025, it completed the replacement and disposal of water stored in dedicated aqueous film-forming foam equipment tanks contaminated with PFOS and PFOA at all JSDF facilities.

In addition, in light of the possibility that new organic fluorine compounds may in the future become subject to regulation under relevant laws and regulations, the MOD formulated the Action Plan for the Disposal of Organic Fluorine Aqueous Film-Forming Foam in the Ministry of Defense in March 2026 in order to promote the phased replacement of aqueous film-forming foam containing organic fluorine compounds with alternatives that do not use such compounds as raw materials, or the transition to water-based fire suppression systems.

2 Initiatives Related to USFJ Facilities/Areas

USFJ is committed to the appropriate environmental management to protect the environment in the surrounding areas and ensure the safety of U.S. military personnel and residents in the surrounding areas according to the Supplementary Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Stewardship[4] and the Japan Environmental Governing Standards (JEGS) established by USFJ.

REFERENCE: Impact of wind power generation facilities on the operations of the JSDF/USFJ and Requests to related business operators

URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/chouwa/windpower/index.html

1 In November 2022, the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) utilized Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) for the first time during government aircraft operations.

2 Act on Measures in Securing Smooth and Safe Activities Using Radio Wave by the Self-Defense Forces, etc. While Avoiding Radio Wave Transmission Interference Caused by Installation or Modification of Wind Power Generation Facility

3 A collective term for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl compounds, which consist of organic fluorine compounds. PFOS and PFOA are included in PFAS. They have water-repellent, oil-repellent, and heat-resistant properties, and have hitherto been used in wide-ranging applications such as foam fire-extinguishing agents, semiconductors, and metal plating.

4 Agreement Between Japan and the United States of America on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Stewardship Relating to the United States Armed Forces in Japan, Supplementary to the Agreement Under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States of America, Regarding Facilities and Areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan. This agreement was concluded in 2015 to supplement the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement for cooperation in environmental matters. It stipulates establishment and maintenance of procedures for access to the facilities /areas in case of a contemporaneous environmental incidents as well as issuance and maintenance of environmental standards by the U.S. side.

1 Efforts to Save Utilities

In USFJ facilities/areas, efforts are made to save utilities, which include changes to energy-efficient heating/ventilation/air-conditioning equipment; installation of motion sensors for lights-out during absence; installation of solar panels; reduction of the period to use cooling/heating equipment and review of the preset temperature; and control of lighting and lights-out night lighting.

2 Response to PFAS

The USFJ disposed of aqueous film-forming foam containing PFOS and PFOA at all of the USFJ facilities/areas by October 2024 and will either change to aqueous film-forming foam which does not contain any organic fluorine compounds as a raw material, or convert to water suppression systems by October 1, 2026.

When PFOS leaked from USFJ facilities/areas into the surrounding environment, the MOD has accessed the USFJ facility/area and has taken samples in collaboration with relevant local governments, based on the Supplementary Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Stewardship. The MOD will continue to cooperate closely with relevant ministries and agencies, related local governments, and the U.S. side in order to take necessary measures.

Section 3 Public Relations Activities, Public Records and Archives Management, Information Disclosure, and Related Activities

1 Various Public Relations Activities

As the activities of the Ministry of Defense/Japan Self-Defense Forces (MOD/JSDF) cannot be carried out without the understanding and support of the Japanese people, public relations activities are important to gain the trust and cooperation of the public. Accordingly, the MOD/JSDF will continue to proactively conduct public relations activities regarding its efforts and initiatives through a variety of means in order to clearly communicate the role of the JSDF to people of wide-ranging generations and deepen public understanding of and support for the JSDF among as many citizens as possible.

In addition, given that understanding and support from foreign countries are also of utmost importance for the JSDF to conduct its missions successfully, it is essential that the MOD strengthens efforts to provide information to the international community about MOD/JSDF initiatives, including JSDF activities abroad.

See Reference 70 (Prepared by the MOD based on "Public Opinion Survey on the Self Defense Forces and Defense Issues" (Public Relations Office of Cabinet Office))

1 Providing Information Both Domestically and Internationally

The MOD/JSDF conducts active PR activities using the Internet, including through official websites, social media, and video distribution. The MOD has also been making great efforts to provide accurate information in a more extensive and timely fashion by creating brochures and PR videos, assisting in editing the PR magazine "MAMOR," cooperating with media coverage, dispatching instructors to give lectures and talks, etc. In addition, as part of its efforts to disseminate information to young people, the MOD/JSDF is posting content for young people, including videos, on the "Ministry of Defense/Self-Defense Forces KIDS SITE," and also publishes "Maru wakari! (All You Need to Know) Defense of Japan" aimed at upper elementary school to high school students.

Furthermore, MOD/JSDF activities are increasingly expanding worldwide, so it is extremely important to accurately transmit those activities to the international community and secure the understanding and trust of the respective countries. To achieve this, the MOD/JSDF is disseminating information in English and in other foreign languages and, in particular, upgrading the MOD's English website and actively sharing timely, easy-to-understand information through social media. At the same time, it is engaging in PR activities aimed at the international community through various means, such as providing opportunities for interviews by overseas media, creating an English version of the Defense White Paper, and issuing the English-language PR pamphlet "Japan Defense Focus" (JDF).

See Fig. III-4-3-1 (Usage Status of Social Media (Number of Followers) of the MOD/JSDF); Fig. III-4-3-2 (Initiatives for Providing Information by JSDF Units)

Fig. III-4-3-1 Usage Status of Social Media (Number of Followers) of the MOD/JSDF

(as of March 31, 2026)	X	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube
MOD / JSDF	Approx. 1,240,000 Approx. 30,000 for English-language accounts	Approx. 200,000	Approx. 150,000 1,000 for English-language accounts	Approx. 90,000
JSO	Approx. 350,000	Approx. 40,000	Approx. 40,000	Approx. 20,000
GSO	Approx. 830,000	Approx. 230,000	Approx. 120,000	Approx. 310,000
MSO	Approx. 920,000	Approx. 300,000	Approx. 190,000	Approx. 370,000
ASO	Approx. 720,000	Approx. 130,000	Approx. 220,000	Approx. 170,000
MOD ATLA	Approx. 60,000	Approx. 1,500	Approx. 3,000	Approx. 70,000

Fig. III-4-3-2 Initiatives for Providing Information by JSDF Units

Air Self-Defense Force Hyakuri Base Official Account (X)



Maritime Self-Defense Force Official Account (X)



Ground Self-Defense Force Official Account (X)



2 Events and PR Facilities

The MOD/JSDF conducts activities to widely inform the public about the current activities and status of the JSDF. These activities include cruises to experience MSDF vessels and Blue Impulse demonstration flights by the ASDF. In addition, at camps and bases throughout the country, events including equipment exhibitions and unit tours are held on occasions such as the anniversary of the unit's foundation. There are also examples of parades being held in cities with the cooperation of local communities. Furthermore, as part of the commemorative activities for the JSDF's anniversary, the JSDF Marching Festival is held every year.

Moreover, the MOD has also been actively opening its PR facilities to the public. As of the end of March 2026, approximately 517,000 visitors had participated in tours of the MOD's PR facilities in the Ichigaya area (Ichigayadai Tour), where the underground bunker of the Imperial General Headquarters is now open to the public. In addition, each JSDF service also has PR facilities and museums that are open to the public.

These events, etc. are intended to further promote public relations and recruitment efforts in order to secure JSDF personnel, which is a vital necessity, based on the decision made at the Ministerial Meeting on Improving the Treatment and Working Environments and Establishing New Lifetime Career Plans of Self-Defense Forces Personnel. Accordingly, they will serve as opportunities to increase interest in the JSDF, through the participation of young people, particularly those who are interested in enlisting in the JSDF. Furthermore, the MOD/JSDF also strives to provide opportunities for more citizens to learn about the activities of the JSDF by streaming videos of events, etc. on the Internet.



City parade on Bell Road, Sakaemachi, Takikawa City, Hokkaido Prefecture (June 2025)



JSDF Marching Festival (November 2025)



Assisting with research for the Prime Original film *The Silent Service: The Battle of Arctic Ocean*

REFERENCE: Events and exchange activities (a list of various events held by the MOD/JSDF throughout Japan
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/////////press/events/index.html

MOVIE: JSDF FY 2025 Marching Festival
URL: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=qnkNqoVG3Ao&list=RDqnkNqoVG3Ao&start_radio=1&pp=ygUP6Z-z5qW944G-44Gk44KKoAcB

MOVIE: Highlights of the FY2025 Fuji Fire Power Exercise
URL: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=_ACe_qy0q1c&pp=ygUY5a-M5aOr57eP5ZCI54Gr5Yqb5ryU57-S

MOVIE: Maritime Self-Defense Force recruitment commercial: “Igaina kaiji (Surprising facts about the Maritime Self-Defense Force)” (15 seconds)
URL: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=q0yCreXiYP4

MOVIE: Recruit Air Self-Defense Force personnel!
URL: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=j6cbeaVrFr4

3 Troop Reviews, Fleet Reviews, and Air Reviews

Each year, the MOD/JSDF has conducted troop reviews, fleet reviews, and air reviews by assembling large numbers of units and large quantities of equipment from across Japan at a single location. However, as Japan faces the most severe and complex security environment of the postwar era, it has become difficult to conduct such reviews while maintaining a seamless national defense posture. Therefore, unless there is a major change in the security environment surrounding Japan, it has been decided that troop reviews, fleet reviews, and air reviews will not be conducted.

4 Enlistment Experience Programs

The MOD/JSDF offers Enlistment Experience Programs for groups, companies, and other organizations.[1] These programs are intended to promote participants' understanding of the MOD/JSDF by offering opportunities to experience the daily life and training of the JSDF, as well as to have direct contact with JSDF personnel.

2 Initiatives for Public Document Management and Information Disclosure

1 Necessity of Proper Management of Public Documents and Proper Operation of the Information Disclosure System

Democracy, which is the most important system of the country, is founded on the principle that the public has access to accurate information, thereby making appropriate judgment and exercise of sovereignty. Public documents held by the government are of the utmost importance for the public's access to accurate information. For this reason, it is an important responsibility for the government, including the MOD/JSDF, to manage information in an appropriate manner and appropriately respond to the public's requests for information disclosure.

2 Promotion of Proper Management of Public Documents and Proper Operation of the Information Disclosure System

The MOD/JSDF takes it seriously that the issues over daily reports in South Sudan and Iraq brought about the public's distrust in the MOD/JSDF.[2]

The MOD/JSDF is making every effort to prevent recurrence based on measures[3] necessary for the proper management of public documents by the entire government. The MOD/JSDF is also working on ensuring proper management and responding to requests for information disclosure by reforming the awareness of personnel and the organizational culture, enhancing the supervisory framework, etc.

We will promote systematic and efficient management by managing public documents electronically, from their creation to storage, disposal, and transfer, facilitating the tracking of public documents, history management, and search. At the same time, we also promote improvement in the efficiency of public document management operations by reducing the use of paper-based public documents, contributing to improved work environment and work style reforms such as telework.

See Reference 71 (Record of Information Disclosure by the Ministry of Defense [FY2025])

1 These tours are designed for participants to experience everyday life in the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF. They are held upon request by private companies and other organizations through the Provincial Cooperation Offices.

2 In 2016, the MOD gave inappropriate responses and external explanations with respect to disclosure requests for daily reports in South Sudan and other information. Furthermore, as a part of its measures to prevent recurrence of the problem related to daily reports in South Sudan, the MOD advanced work on the management of daily reports and other information, and in 2017, the Defense Minister Tomomi Inada (then) gave instructions to search for the daily reports in Iraq. Even though they were discovered, this was not reported to the Minister.

3 "Measures for Ensuring Appropriate Management of Public Documents" (adopted by the Ministerial Council on the Management of Public Documents and Related Matters on July 20, 2018)

3 Initiatives for the Personal Data Protection System

In light of respecting individual rights and interests in line with the Personal Information Protection Act,[4] the MOD/JSDF has adopted measures to manage the security of personal information under its control and responds appropriately to requests for the disclosure of such information.

4 Initiatives for Policy Evaluation, etc.

1 Engagement in Policy Evaluation

The MOD has been conducting evaluations of various policies based on its policy evaluation system. In FY2025, the MOD conducted policy evaluations[5] of projects concerning research and development (R&D), special taxation measures and the like, and regulations.

2 Promotion of Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM)

The MOD, under the supervision of the Director-General for Evidence-based Policymaking, practices EBPM through Administrative Project Reviews and promotes the use of EBPM in decision-making processes.

3 Appropriate Operation of the Whistleblower Protection System

The MOD/JSDF sets up a system to handle whistleblowing made by its officials, employees, and outside workers, establishing internal and external contact desks to deal with whistleblowing and to protect whistleblowers.

4 Act on the Protection of Personal Information
5 Policy evaluation is an initiative carried out to measure and analyze the effects of the policies of each ministry and agency, and use its results to revise the policies, or plan and formulate new ones.

Part IV

Reinforcing Defense Production and Technological Bases

Chapter 1 Situation Concerning Defense Production and Technological Bases

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

Chapter 3 Promoting Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation and Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology

Chapter 4 Equipment Optimization Efforts

Chapter 1 Situation Concerning Defense Production and Technological Bases

In recent years, the security environment surrounding Japan has become increasingly severe and complex, and the challenges faced by the MOD/JSDF are also changing at a pace far exceeding initial expectations.

For example, learning the lessons from Russia's aggression against Ukraine, it is necessary for Japan to work to secure and maintain sustained operational capability and strongly address supply chain risks in the defense industry. Furthermore, as countries actively invest in cutting-edge science and technologies, including those in defense areas, competition intensifies, and new ways of warfare emerge and are evolving day by day, it is necessary to actively incorporate cutting-edge civilian technologies and rapidly develop and strengthen the defense technology base. Moreover, in the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II, in which strengthening cooperation with allies and like-minded countries under the spirit of One Cooperative Effort Among Nations (OCEAN) is becoming increasingly important, it is necessary to actively promote the transfer of defense equipment as an effective means of achieving this cooperation.

The current security environment has highlighted the fact that the defense production and technological bases of Japan are virtually an integral part of defense capability itself. For these reasons, the MOD/JSDF are tackling various challenges in order to strengthen the defense production and technological bases.

Section 1 Defense Production and Technological Bases Supporting Security

1 "New Ways of Warfare" and Defense Production and Technological Bases

Rapid advances in science and technology in recent years have brought about fundamental changes in the nature of national security. Countries are accelerating research and development to ensure their technological superiority, especially through the acquisition of cutting-edge technologies that could become so-called "game changers" which dramatically alter the future character of warfare.

New technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), quantum technology, and new forms of energy utilization are being applied to equipment,[1] expanding the character of warfare not only in the conventional domains such as ground, maritime, and air, but also into space, cyber, and electromagnetic domains, including the cognitive dimension. In addition, the rapid advancements of information-related technologies and information infrastructure, such as AI and Social Networking Service (SNS), have dramatically increased the risk of hybrid warfare, in which military and non-military means are combined, and the expansion of information warfare through the spread of disinformation.

2 Trends in Each Country Concerning Defense Production and Technological Bases

Many countries are taking on a variety of initiatives in order to maintain and enhance their national defense production and technological bases.

In the United States, the Department of War accounts for approximately half of government-funded research expenditure, and in addition it provides large-scale financial assistance to innovative research by companies, universities, and others, and works to utilize cutting-edge civilian technologies in the security area. The governments of the United Kingdom and Australia, as well as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have similarly been providing financial assistance for innovative research and development

1 Equipment, ships, aircraft, food and other supplies used by the Japan Self-Defense Forces (including their parts and components, limited to those used exclusively by the JSDF).

in the private sector to acquire advanced civilian technology. China, on the other hand, is promoting civil-military fusion as a national strategy, positioning the development of emerging domains (networks, data, AI, biotechnology, nuclear, etc.) as new domains of national security.

Moreover, many countries understand the defense production and technological bases in their own country to be 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 not only to strengthening the defense production and technological bases but also to strengthening the relationship with the partner country receiving the exports.

See Part I, Chapter 4, Section 4 (Trends Concerning Defense Production and Technological Bases)

Section 2 Environment Surrounding Japan's Defense Production and Technological Bases

In Japan, there is now an urgent need to quickly acquire superior equipment and the like that will enable uniquely Japanese new ways of defense based on new ways of warfare. This can only be achieved through long-term, constant efforts to accumulate technological knowledge in Japan, develop highly skilled human resources, and maintain manufacturing equipment and facilities that meet our country's particular needs.

For that reason, in the National Security Strategy formulated in December 2022 and other documents, the Government of Japan clearly stated its policy of tackling the current severe situation surrounding defense production and technological bases, which are essential infrastructure for securing superior defense equipment in Japan, making these bases virtually an integral part of defense capability itself, and making efforts to reinforce these bases fundamentally.

Firstly, Japan's defense production and technological bases have several unique characteristics. It is a given fact that in Japan, which does not have arsenals (state-run factories for manufacturing equipment and other military items), the important role of the base is heavily reliant on private companies, including not only large corporations that receive orders directly from the Ministry of Defense (MOD), called prime contractors, but also many small and medium-sized subcontractors called suppliers. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that there are an extremely large number of suppliers involved in the production of equipment; for example, more than 1,000 companies are involved in the manufacturing and assembly of various parts for tanks and fighter jets, and more than 8,000 companies for destroyers. Amid the demand for fundamental reinforcement of defense capabilities, the role of the defense industry is becoming increasingly important in securing equipment for the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) to carry out its missions.

Especially when manufacturing defense equipment,[1] it is necessary to invest considerable management resources to meet the high level of functional and performance requirements and information security measures. Companies require a certain degree of predictability in order to justify such investments from an economic standpoint. Furthermore, these companies are required to produce a wide variety of products in small quantities, and in addition, due to the long operating period of equipment, it is also necessary for them to secure manufacturing and other systems over the long term. Moreover, basically their only customers are the MOD/JSDF, so production volume is extremely limited, and opportunities for companies to recoup their investments also remain limited. In addition, there are still some companies that harbor aversion to the defense business or that face reputational risks.

As a result of these circumstances, Japan's defense industry is facing various challenges, with cases of companies deciding to withdraw from defense businesses or downsize their operations emerging intermittently. Consequently, this not only interferes with 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, resulting in Japan losing its technological superiority in the field of national security.

In addition to these factors, as the digital transformation (DX) of the contract performance environment for defense-related businesses has rapidly progressed in recent years, the defense industry, which holds sensitive information, is facing the growing threat of suspected state-sponsored cyberattacks against its information systems and networks. For example, in 2021, it was announced that a large-scale cyberattack had been carried out against approximately 200 companies and research institutions in Japan, including defense-related businesses, by a cyberattack group highly likely to be linked to the Chinese military. Furthermore, in 2024, it was announced that communications equipment managed by a Japanese research institution had been compromised, resulting in unauthorized access to servers and the leakage of operational information.

Moreover, as the international trend of hoarding critical resources grows, the risk of being unable to import raw

1 Manufacturing, research and development, repair, and provision of other related services.

materials due to export restrictions imposed by foreign governments, for example, and thus being unable to secure a stable supply of equipment, is becoming a reality.

In light of this environment surrounding Japan's defense production and technological bases, the MOD/JSDF is taking various measures to maintain and reinforce the bases.

Perspective

Challenges Facing Japan's Defense Industry

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There are "structural challenges" facing Japan's defense industry. Amid increasingly sophisticated equipment, rising tensions in the international environment, and intensifying competition for technological hegemony, conventional models of procurement and production are nearing their limits. In particular, (1) security of supply chains, (2) decline of skilled personnel, and (3) cybersecurity vulnerabilities are serious risks that could destabilize the defense industrial base itself.

The first challenge is supply chain security. Defense equipment is composed of thousands of components, electronic parts, and software. A compromise in the reliability of even one of these elements directly affects the security of the equipment as a whole. In recent years, technologies with high dual-use potential, including submarine communications infrastructure and semiconductor manufacturing equipment, have become focal points of international security concern. Tightening of investment screening for acquisitions of foreign companies along with export controls on rare metals by certain countries point to the geopolitical risks facing supply chains. Given the possibility that the production of ammunition, sensors, power semiconductors, and other items could be affected, it is essential to strengthen traceability; secure alternative procurement sources, including urban mining for rare metals; and expand stockpiles of strategic materials.

The second challenge is the weakening of the human resource base. The manufacture and maintenance of defense equipment require skilled workers with advanced processing techniques and tacit knowledge. However, as large numbers of the baby-boomer generation continue to leave the workforce, the hiring of young workers has not sufficiently progressed, and the succession of skills has lagged behind. For small and medium-sized suppliers in particular, order instability and low profitability have made it difficult to secure personnel. As the defense industry is centered on high-mix, low-volume production, a loss of skills immediately leads to degradation in quality and delivery delays. In addition, the market for defense equipment is smaller than that for civilian products, and exports are also limited, creating structural constraints that make it difficult for companies to undertake capital investment and human resource development.

The third challenge concerns the rise of cyberattacks centered on downstream segments of the supply chain. In recent years, methods of stealing sensitive information through subcontractors with vulnerable security systems have been increasing. Domestically, successive ransomware attacks in general industry sectors have made it clear that vulnerabilities in information management can be exploited from the outside. For defense-related companies, the leakage of design drawings or test data would not only result in the loss of technological superiority, but also constitute a serious loss from the perspective of national security. While there is a need to unify security standards across the entire supply chain, introduce an audit system, and establish a Zero Trust information management framework, the cost burden on small and medium-sized enterprises is significant, making support measures for implementation essential.

These three challenges are interconnected. Going forward, it will be necessary to adopt a perspective that redefines the defense industry as foundational national security infrastructure, while rebalancing efficiency and redundancy. What is now being called into question is "industrial policy as security," which cannot be measured in terms of economic rationality alone.

(Note) This column is an independent analysis from the researcher's academic perspective, and its contents do not represent an official government position.

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

Section 1 Reinforcing Defense Production Bases

1 Act on Enhancing Defense Production and Technology Bases and its Basic Policy

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.). In this context, defense equipment and the defense industry are inseparable. The Act on Enhancing Defense Production and Technology Bases was enforced in 2023 in order to take necessary measures to maintain and enhance the capabilities of the defense industry to produce advanced equipment and ensure high operational rates.

Under this Act, the Minister of Defense is supposed to establish a basic policy,[1] which was announced in October 2023. This basic policy prescribes the matters necessary to ensure adequate execution of the measures stipulated in the Act. Also, it indicates the new direction on how to maintain and reinforce the defense production and technological bases in the future, replacing the "Strategy on Defense Production and Technological Bases" that was formulated in 2014.

See Reference 72 (Basic Policy on Enhancing Defense Production and Technology Bases)

1 Main Direction for Maintaining and Enhancing Defense Production and Technological Bases

(1) Significance of Maintaining and Enhancing Defense Production and Technological Bases

The significance of maintaining and enhancing defense production and technological bases within Japan has been pointed out in the past from the perspectives of ensuring Japan's independence in the security environment, enhancing its deterrence, and contributing economically and technologically to domestic industries. Especially at a time when uniquely Japanese new ways of defense and sustainable operational capability are needed based on new ways of warfare, the role played by the domestic defense production and technological bases is becoming increasingly important for the early acquisition of advanced equipment and for maintaining and securing sustained operational capability of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF).

Furthermore, while the distinction between technologies developed for civilian use and for security purposes has become blurred, the domain of dual-use technologies for both defense and civilian use (components and technologies) is expanding. Due to this, there is a growing trend toward a virtuous cycle between defense and the economy, whereby investment in production and technological bases for strengthening defense capabilities leads to stronger competitiveness in domestic and international civilian markets, and the strengthened production and technological bases resulting from capturing domestic and international civilian markets lead to improvements in the quality and quantity of equipment.

In addition, in recent years, countries have been increasingly hoarding technology from the economic security perspective, and supply chains have been disrupted due to the spread of COVID-19. Under these circumstances, the need to maintain and reinforce defense production and technological bases in Japan has become even greater from the perspective of ensuring stable manufacturing of defense equipment directly concerning the defense of Japan, as well as securing technological superiority.

See Section 4 (Defense Production and Technological Bases and Innovation)

(2) Approach to Procurement of Defense Equipment

On the premise of acquiring equipment that meets the performance requirements necessary for the defense of Japan, it is necessary to decide how to procure equipment according to the following perspectives: (1) Ensure that

1 Basic Policy on Enhancing Defense Production and Technology Bases

continued acquisition, sustainment and maintenance of the defense equipment is sustainable in terms of cost; (2) Nurture areas in which Japan has a comparative advantage and complement, as necessary, areas in which Japan is falling behind or lacking; (3) Maintain and reinforce Japan's defense production and technological bases within Japan. Specifically, when acquiring new defense equipment, domestically produced equipment will be pursued, focusing on the following areas:

a. Defense equipment that can meet various conditions, such as operational concepts, performance, acquisition cost, life cycle cost, schedule, etc., with domestic technologies
b. Defense equipment that is essential in maintaining the sustained operational capability in the event of a contingency as well as in ensuring the ability to improve operations and maintenance in peacetime (e.g., ammunition and ships)
c. Items that should not be dependent on foreign countries from the perspective of confidentiality (e.g., communications, cryptography)
d. Defense equipment that is indispensable for realizing operational concepts that consider Japan's geographical and policy peculiarities
e. The latest technologies from foreign countries that are hard to obtain
f. Items vulnerable to external threats through economic coercion

(3) Approach to International Cooperation

As countries these days compete fiercely in research and development in the military field and make remarkable technological progress, it is difficult for each country to maintain necessary defense production and technological bases without cooperating with other countries. Promoting international cooperation in defense equipment and technology is essential, keeping in mind the basic principle that bases related to defense equipment, which should not be dependent on other countries, should be maintained and enhanced domestically. Therefore, it is necessary to promote international joint research and development in addition to active international cooperation and licensed production, contributing to incorporating the excellent technologies of various countries into Japan's defense equipment.

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 in violation of international law, use of force, or threat by force. Accordingly, the government and private sector will make joint efforts to promote the smooth transfer of defense equipment and technology of high-security significance and international joint development in various fields.

(4) Ideal State of the Defense Industry

The defense industry is an important partner responsible for national defense along with the Ministry of Defense (MOD)/JSDF. At a time when the security environment is changing at an accelerated pace, it is essential to build the capability to continuously develop, produce, and maintain equipment that can fully support Japan's defense in terms of both quality and quantity.

Furthermore, the defense industry is expected to play a role as an entity that realizes a virtuous cycle between defense and the economy through initiatives in the dual-use area and other areas. Until now, the defense industry has been thought to have little potential for growth due to factors such as its main sales channels being limited to the MOD and its low profit margins. However, it is important to move beyond the conventional framework and proactively invest in growth, actively working on the transfer of equipment and capturing of the civilian market through dual-use technologies.

Based on this perception, the public and private sectors will work together to realize the desirable vision for the defense industry outlined below.

(i) Establish systems which can stably provide the equipment necessary for reinforcing defense capabilities in a timely manner and in sufficient quantities.

In particular, it is necessary to secure capabilities in development, production, and sustainment in order to support sustainable operational capability and uniquely Japanese new ways of defense in response to "new ways of warfare." For that reason, build production bases and maintenance bases able to meet the rapid increase in demand, and reinforce the resilience of the supply chain. Moreover, build a defense innovation ecosystem, including national research and development agencies, universities, startups, and others, and actively incorporate cutting-edge science and technology. In conjunction with this, advance the development and production of asymmetric equipment and equipment leveraging dual-use technologies to realize rapid update cycles for defense equipment.

(ii) Through the transfer of defense equipment, aim for the creation of a desirable security environment and ensure production capabilities.

(iii) Advance active investment in the dual-use area to enhance competitiveness in civilian markets, while leveraging the reinforced production and technology bases resulting from success in those markets to improve both the quality and quantity of defense equipment.

(5) Roles of the Government and Defense Equipment Manufacturers in Ensuring Stable Manufacturing of Defense Equipment

It is important for the Government to create an environment that enables defense equipment manufacturers[2] to be

2 Business operators engaged in the manufacture of defense equipment

continuously involved in defense businesses. These defense equipment manufacturers are expected to engage proactively in initiatives to maintain and reinforce the defense production and technological bases, with a strong awareness of their role as a key player in national defense.

2 Measures Based on the Act on Enhancing Defense Production and Technology Bases

(1) Specific Initiatives (reinforcing supply chain resilience, improving manufacturing process efficiency, enhancing cybersecurity, supporting business succession, etc.)

Various risks are assumed to impede the stable manufacturing of defense equipment. For example, (1) the risk of difficulty in importing raw materials because of export restrictions imposed by a foreign government, (2) the risk of delay in delivery or failure to meet the performance requirements because of sluggish productivity and technological standards caused by aging facilities that have not been renewed, (3) the risk of major concerns for any parts infected with malware or spyware in the manufacturing process (parts embedded with malicious software), (4) the risk of leakage of information on performance due to cyberattacks, and (5) the risk of withdrawing from defense projects because it has become challenging to continue the business. The following specific initiatives (initiatives to ensure the stable manufacturing of defense equipment essential for the JSDF to carry out missions, based on the Act on Enhancing Defense Production and Technology Bases) need to be taken by defense equipment manufacturers to respond to such risks effectively and ensure the supply chain consisting of prime contractors and suppliers functions more effectively and efficiently, thereby contributing to stable manufacturing of designated defense equipment:[3]

a. Reinforcing supply chain resilience
- Domestic production and stockpiling of raw materials
- Research and development of alternate materials and products, etc.

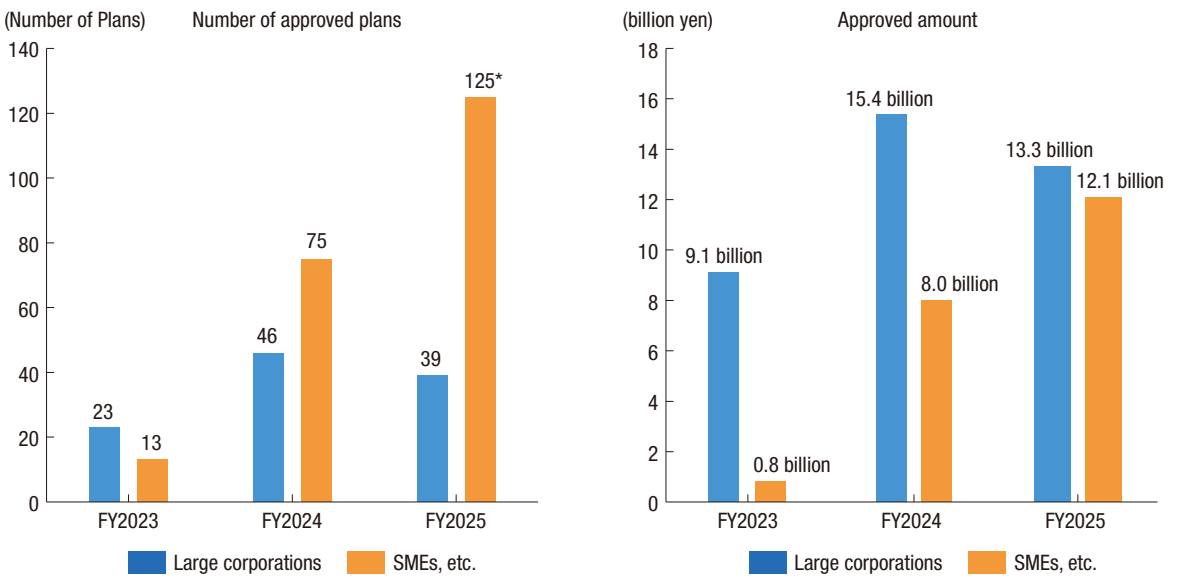
b. Improving manufacturing process efficiency
- Introduction of state-of-the-art equipment and technologies
- Automation of the inspection processes using AI, etc.

c. Enhancing cybersecurity
- Enhancement of information systems
- Employee training, etc.

d. Support for business succession, etc.
- Maintenance of manufacturing facilities
- Employee training (acquisition of technology and know-how), etc.

Following the Basic Policy, the Defense Minister shall approve plans for specific initiatives submitted by defense equipment manufacturers (Stable Manufacturing Plans). The MOD then enters into a contract directly with the defense

Fig. IV-2-1-1 Record of Approvals for the Stable Manufacturing Plans



*FY2025 includes one general incorporated association.

3 Defense equipment essential for the JSDF to carry out its missions as designated by the Minister of Defense, appropriate procurement of which by the MOD would be hindered if its manufacture, etc., by the specific defense equipment manufacturer were to be suspended.

equipment manufacturer for the specific initiatives after approval of the plans and pay compensation without delay following the contract's provisions. Furthermore, the business plan can still be approved even in the case of the acquisition of equipment to be used for both defense and commercial purposes. In FY2025, 164 projects were approved.

See Fig. IV-2-1-1 (Record of Approvals for the Stable Manufacturing Plans)

(2) Examples of Projects Approved as Specific Initiatives

To date, business plans of many companies, both large corporations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), have been approved based on the Act on Enhancing Defense Production and Technology Bases.

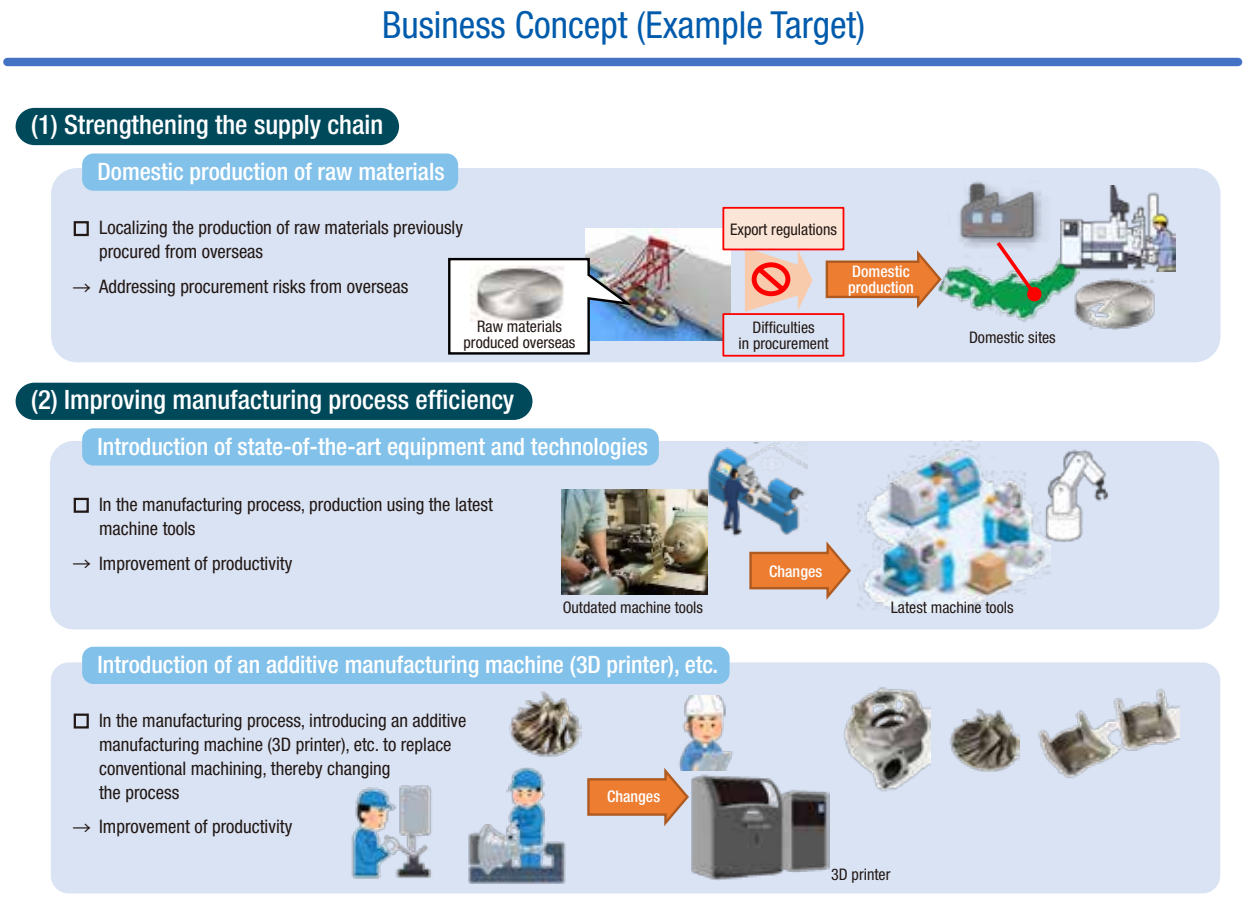
Regarding the reinforcing of the supply chain resilience, plans concerning, for example, investigations into introducing domestic production of imported members and investigations for selecting alternatives for parts whose production has been suspended, have been approved. Furthermore, regarding the improving of manufacturing process efficiency, plans concerning capital investment for improving efficiency through process consolidation and labor-saving measures have been approved.

In FY2025, a total of 164 plans were approved, and 124 of these were initiatives by SMEs.

In addition, the approved plans, application methods, and consultation service information are published on the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) website.

See Fig. IV-2-1-2 (Examples of Projects Approved as Specific Initiatives)

Fig. IV-2-1-2 Examples of Projects Approved as Specific Initiatives



VOICE

Voice from Manufacturing Sites Supporting Japan's Defense Industry: A Company Implementing Specific Initiatives

TAKAGI Toshimi, General Manager, Firearms Department, Howa Machinery, Ltd.

Since developing and manufacturing the Type 64 7.62 mm rifle, which was adopted by the MOD as standard equipment in 1964, our company has been engaged in the development and production of equipment centered on small arms. At present, we manufacture the Type 20 5.56 mm rifle, as well as the 120 mm mortar RT, 81 mm mortar L16, 76 mm smoke grenade discharger, and other equipment.

While we had long endeavored to maintain and enhance the production base for defense equipment, metal processing of key components relied heavily on the skills of experienced personnel. As a result, the aging of skilled workers and the succession of technical skills had become major challenges. Another issue was responding to the aging of difficult-to-replace equipment used for processing key components, as equipment failure could require considerable time for recovery and potentially affect procurement plans.

Our company's Machine Tools Group and our know-how in constructing metalworking production lines enabled us to develop a plan for addressing these challenges, but the need for substantial capital investment posed a major constraint.

Accordingly, we leveraged the measures to strengthen the industrial base under the Act on Enhancing Defense Production and Technology Bases and introduced new equipment following a fundamental review of the machining process. The equipment introduced through this initiative not only replaced aging equipment, it also achieved significant process consolidation, automation, and labor savings, in addition to establishing a framework for reproducing some of the techniques of skilled personnel on state-of-the-art equipment.

As a result, we were able to begin operating a new production system that achieves both stable production of defense equipment and improved productivity. Through further expanding and strengthening these efforts and contributing to defense buildup, we will continue to fulfill our role in Japan's security.



Equipment introduced through the system



Engineers conducting process design

REFERENCE: ATLA Website: Act on Enhancing Defense Production and Technology Bases
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/atla/hourei_dpb.html

(3) Facilitation of Equipment Transfer and the Designated Equipment Transfer Support Corporation

When transferring defense equipment and technology, the defense equipment manufacturer may be required to make appropriate adjustments to specifications and performance from the Japan's security perspective. In particular, it is necessary to appropriately address concerns of losing Japan's technological superiority over other countries in the defense sector by securing information on advanced technologies used in Japan's defense equipment.

The necessary grants are provided when the Defense

Commentary

The Significance of the Fund to Facilitate the Transfer of Defense Equipment

The Fund is administered by the designated Equipment Transfer Support Corporation. This Corporation is responsible for awarding grants to defense equipment manufacturers engaged in the transfer of defense equipment and technology. Grants are provided when manufacturers are required by the Defense Minister to make adjustments to specifications and performance from a national security perspective—such as ensuring the confidentiality of technologies used in JSDF equipment.

The formation and progress of defense equipment transfer projects are significantly affected by the circumstances of, and coordination with, the governments and other authorities of potential recipient countries. This fund mechanism enables the immediate allocation of grants once the possibility of the transfer of defense equipment arises, thereby avoiding missed opportunities for equipment transfer as a result of needing to submit a budget request following the emergence of an unanticipated case. In fact, there have been cases in which companies have refrained from participating in the international competitive bidding process due to the short timeframe—approximately one month—from the public announcement to the bid submission deadline. This period was insufficient for them to recover the costs required to adjust to the specified technical requirements and performance standards. In light of these experiences, in March 2024, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) established the Fund to allow for the flexible provision of grants. Even before the contract is concluded, grants can be awarded. They may also be provided not only for design and manufacturing costs required for adjusting specifications and performance, but also for research expenses incurred when examining the details of such adjustments in coordination with the governments or relevant entities of countries to which defense equipment may be transferred.

Furthermore, maintaining a sufficient balance in the fund at the time Adjustment Plans are approved, ensures that grants for adjusting specifications and performance can be reliably provided. This financial assurance encourages manufacturers to actively engage in the transfer of defense equipment and technology. Moreover, it signals Japan's proactive commitment to such transfers, thereby fostering mutual trust with partner countries and facilitating negotiations toward the transfer of defense equipment.

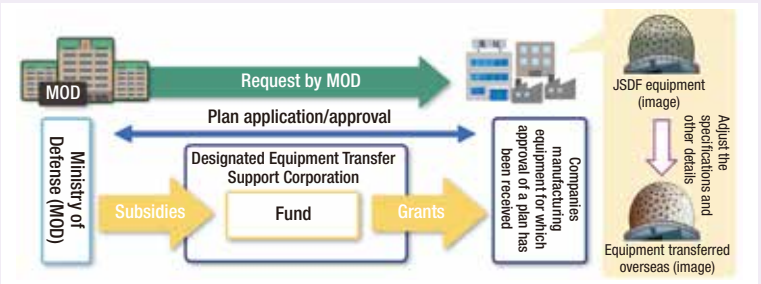
As of FY2025, Adjustment Plans have been approved for transfers including the Unified Complex Radio Antenna (UNICORN) to India and Australian general purpose frigates, with the cumulative amount certified reaching approximately 55.0 billion yen.

With the recent revision of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, an increasing number of countries have expressed interest in purchasing Japanese defense equipment. From the perspective of fostering a desirable security environment for Japan, we will continue to accumulate approved cases and engage in dialogue with the governments and relevant entities of foreign countries to facilitate the transfer of defense equipment and technology.

Consultation desk: soubi-iten@ext.atla.mod.go.jp



further general purpose frigate



Minister requires a defense equipment manufacturer to adjust specifications and performance.

In February 2024, the Defense Minister designated the Designated Equipment Transfer Support Corporation to manage the allocation of the aforementioned grants and the fund necessary for such grants. The designation also aims to ensure that equipment transfers conducted by defense equipment manufacturers are carried out smoothly and under appropriate management, in line with the policy objectives of the MOD.

The MOD established the Fund to Facilitate the Transfer of Defense Equipment in March 2024, and has provided a total of 160 billion yen to said Corporation to date (as of June 1, 2026).

See Chapter 3 (Promoting Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation and Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology)

(4) Protecting the Confidential of Defense Equipment

In manufacturing defense equipment, the MOD provides contractors with classified information on defense equipment, such as advanced technologies, for steady procurement of higher-quality defense equipment. On the other hand, in recent years, the threats of leakage of classified information in defense equipment including cyberattacks and corporate acquisition by countries of security concern, have become higher.

With this in mind, the classified information provided by the government to contractors has been re-designated as "Confidential of Defense Equipment," explicitly indicating to contractors and their employees that handling such classified information requires strict management. In addition, the same penalties currently imposed on JSDF personnel are applied to persons who intentionally leak these confidential, which will prevent leakage more effectively.

See 2-4 (Strengthening Defense Industrial Security)

(5) Government Ownership of Designated Defense Equipment Manufacturing Facilities by the Defense Minister, etc.

If it is determined that stable procurement of designated defense equipment by the MOD is not possible through the various efforts described in (1) and (2) above, the MOD may acquire the designated equipment manufacturing facilities or equipment that manufacture such designated defense equipment. The acquired defense equipment manufacturing facilities will be managed by contractors commissioned by the MOD for the manufacture of designated defense equipment. Therefore, as the implementing bodies consist of private companies, efficient operation is expected, no different from their regular business activities, even under this system.

2 Main Efforts in Addition to the Act on Enhancing Defense Production and Technology Bases

1 Making the Defense Business More Attractive

The defense business requires a considerable investment of management resources to meet the high level of performance requirements and information security measures. On the other hand, profitability tended to be less than the standards under the procurement system.

In light of these circumstances, in calculating prices in the cost accounting system, the MOD has established a system for the fair evaluation of business efforts and the appropriate calculation of profits for companies. Specifically, the MOD revised the profit margin calculation system, and introduced Quality, Cost, Delivery (QCD) evaluation[4] to calculate the profit margin between 5% and 10%, and grant a cost fluctuation adjustment rate[5] of 1% to 5% depending on the performance period of the contract.

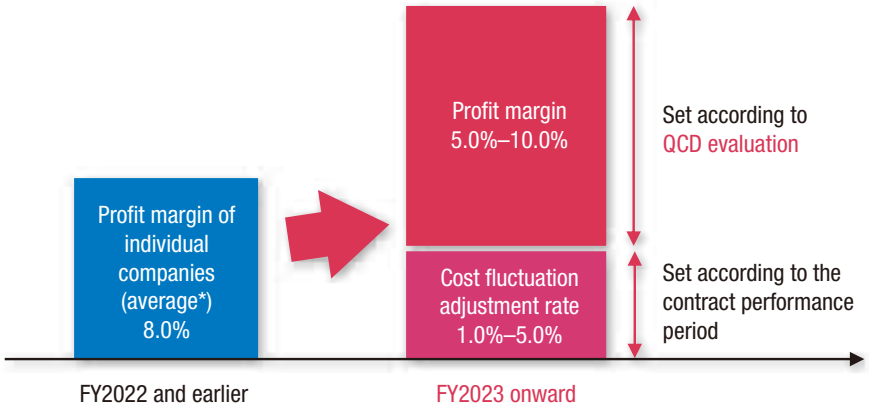
The MOD also continuously reviews various contract systems for further streamlining of the procurement system.

See Fig. IV-2-1-3 (Measures to Ensure Appropriate Profits in Defense Projects (QCD Evaluation, Cost Fluctuation Adjustment Rate))

4 A system for evaluating Quality, Cost, Delivery, and other factors with respect to the defense businesses of companies and reflecting the evaluations in the profit margin

5 This system absorbs the risks of future cost increases, such as rising labor costs and inflation, that are beyond the business efforts of the companies to control.

Fig. IV-2-1-3 Measures to Ensure Appropriate Profits in Defense Projects (QCD Evaluation, Cost Fluctuation Adjustment Rate)



* Average profit margin for companies that calculate expense rates in their estimated price determinations (fiscal years 2020 to 2024).

VOICE

Voices from Manufacturing Sites Supporting Japan's Defense Industry: A Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise

AIZAWA Misaki, Assembly Group 1, Sheet Metal Processing Division, Yoshimitsu Industry Co., Ltd.

I am currently involved in the manufacture of defense equipment at Yoshimitsu Industry. My previous job was in customer service, but in October 2022, I made the decision to switch careers to manufacturing and have since been working as a welder.

If I had to sum it up, my honest feeling is that I wish I had taken on this challenge sooner.

While I had been interested in manufacturing work for some time, I had considerable anxiety about whether I could really make it in the field having only worked in customer service, and I was finding it difficult to take that first step. It was around that time that I attended a trial program at a vocational training school and realized that quietly focusing on hands-on work might suit me. This experience became a turning point for me.

What I learned at the training school cannot necessarily be applied directly to the actual workplace, but it gave me far more confidence and reassurance than entering the world of manufacturing with no prior knowledge. Thanks to the support of my teachers, I was able to move forward more smoothly in my job search than I would have been able to on my own.

I am now in my fourth year with the company, and surprisingly, I have found that the skills of observation and insight that I developed in customer service are proving useful in my current workplace.

There is a lot to remember, and I have my share of troubles.

Still, knowing that I am continuing to grow by building on the skills and experience I gained in my previous job makes me feel that taking that first step was the right decision.

Unlike in customer service, I do not receive direct words of thanks from customers. However, I feel a great sense of accomplishment when a product takes shape through my own hands, and knowing that the product plays a part in Japan's defense gives real meaning to my work.



Ms. AIZAWA Misaki, Assembly Group 1, Sheet Metal Processing Division, Yoshimitsu Industry Co., Ltd., performing welding work

KAWARAYA Nobuhisa, General Manager, Sheet Metal Processing Division, Yoshimitsu Industry Co., Ltd.

Moving from a familiar environment into the world of manufacturing with no prior experience must have brought both excitement and anxiety.

Despite this, since joining the company, Ms. Aizawa has approached welding work with a positive and determined attitude to take on new challenges and learn new skills, and she faces her daily tasks with sincerity.

Rather than leaving unclear points unresolved, she confirms each one as it arises and reliably builds her knowledge and skills. This attitude is reflected in her day-to-day conduct, and despite starting from zero experience, she is steadily developing her technical abilities. Now, she stands out for her careful and consistent work in welding and other processes and has earned trust as a vital member of the team.

Going forward, I hope she will demonstrate all the more her inherent spirit of challenge, expand the scope of her duties, and achieve further growth and success as key member supporting the Sheet Metal Processing Division.



The authors, Mr. Kawaraya and Ms. Aizawa, engaged in on-the-job welding training

SAKAMOTO Kazuki, President & Representative Director, Yoshimitsu Industry Co., Ltd.

Manufacturing sites are often seen as workplaces mainly for people with manufacturing experience or specialized education from technical high schools or colleges. The fact that Ms. Aizawa took the leap from another industry into such a field and has earned recognition for her technical ability with careful workmanship and commitment to quality as her strengths, regardless of her length of experience, is a great encouragement to our company and helps broaden the possibilities of manufacturing.

For small and medium-sized enterprises like ours, securing and developing human resources is a major challenge that directly affects business continuity. How companies accept new personnel, promote their development, and improve employee satisfaction under these circumstances is becoming increasingly important.

As an enterprise supporting the defense industry, we continue to provide reliable technologies and quality while also making investments in facilities to improve productivity. However, a company does not grow through facilities alone. We believe that only by creating an environment where its personnel can hone their skills and fully demonstrate their abilities can a company move on to the next stage.

Going forward, we will continue to pursue both “investment in facilities” and “investment in people”—in other words, the creation of a workplace where people with diverse careers and strengths can play active roles with pride and fulfillment—as we strive to be a company capable of sustainable growth.

VOICE

Voice from Manufacturing Sites Supporting Japan's Defense Industry: A Shipbuilding-Related Company

OKUDA Kiyotoshi, Director & Senior Managing Executive Officer, General Manager, Naval Vessel Repair Division, Sasebo Heavy Industries Co., Ltd.

Situated in the strategic location of Sasebo City, adjacent to the bases of the MSDF and the U.S. Navy, our company traces its origins to the Sasebo Naval Arsenal. Inheriting this tradition and expertise, our company was established with repair and machinery businesses as its foundation and later developed through the addition of a new shipbuilding business. This year, 2026, marks the 80th anniversary of our founding. Over the years, our company has constructed a large number of vessels, including the Nissho Maru, which was the world's largest tanker at the time.

However, in 2022, we suspended our new shipbuilding business amid a prolonged and severe environment surrounding the shipbuilding industry. Taking this as an opportunity, we have proceeded with business restructuring and reallocated management resources focusing on our repair and machinery businesses. We positioned the repair business in particular as the core of our restructuring efforts, based on the business's record of achievements that has earned our company the reputation of "SSK for repairs."

Leveraging this strength, our company recognizes that supporting the high operational availability of JSDF vessels contributes to enhancing deterrence, and we are moving forward as a community-based defense industry and a "new type of shipyard" that contributes to security.

Against this backdrop, the defense-related budget has been increased, and together with moves in the United States toward revitalizing its shipbuilding industry, expectations for the shipbuilding and repair fields are rising. Our company will take full advantage of this favorable momentum, promote the modernization of inefficient facilities, and under the banner of "full-force repair," aim to become Japan's number one repair yard.

We will continue to contribute to Japan's security by working behind the scenes to support the readiness and sustained operation of JSDF vessels.





Equipment being removed from a vessel

2 Revitalization of the Defense Industry

(1) Defense Industry Promotional Exhibition

It is extremely important for companies which have not yet entered the defense industry to actively participate in defense businesses, from the perspective of revitalizing the defense industry and reinforcing the defense production and technological bases. In particular, it is essential to incorporate into the defense industry companies that have previously had little connection to the defense area, such as startup companies with cutting-edge software technologies in areas such as AI and information and communication technology, which are rapidly advancing in the civilian sector.

Since 2016, in order to create opportunities for startup companies, SMEs, and other companies with outstanding technologies and products to become new entrants in the defense industry, ATLA has been holding exhibitions to match them with Japan's defense-related businesses and the MOD/JSDF. In FY2025, the exhibitions were held in Tokyo in December and February, for two days on each occasion.



Scene at the Defense Industry Promotional Exhibition

(2) Utilization of startup companies

a. Joint Promotion Committee for Utilizing Startups in the Defense Industry

Startup companies, through their rapid decision-making, are capable of developing products and services that utilize new technologies and capable of entering new markets. In the rapidly intensifying security environment, they have great potential as partners who can provide flexible solutions to the challenges facing Japan. Furthermore, utilizing the outstanding technologies and products these startup companies possess in defense equipment is extremely important from the perspectives of securing technological superiority for uniquely Japanese new ways of defense based on new ways of warfare as well as maintaining and strengthening Japan's defense production and technological bases. Therefore, the MOD/JSDF will work with startup companies and others and encourage the early deployment of defense equipment in order to actively incorporate the results of research on cutting-edge technology into defense equipment research and development, while utilizing existing civilian technologies and off-the-shelf products. As part of these efforts, the MOD and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) have collaborated to create opportunities to match the needs of the MOD/JSDF with startup companies by utilizing METI's startup support framework and network. The Joint Promotion Committee for Utilizing Startups in the Defense Industry was established as a framework for the relevant divisions of the MOD and METI to meet and hold discussions on a regular basis. Furthermore, as a subcommittee of this Promotion Committee, the MOD and METI hold Startup Joint Hearings to create opportunities for matching in technology areas such as AI and drones in order to match the MOD/JSDF with startup companies in a more focused and efficient manner.

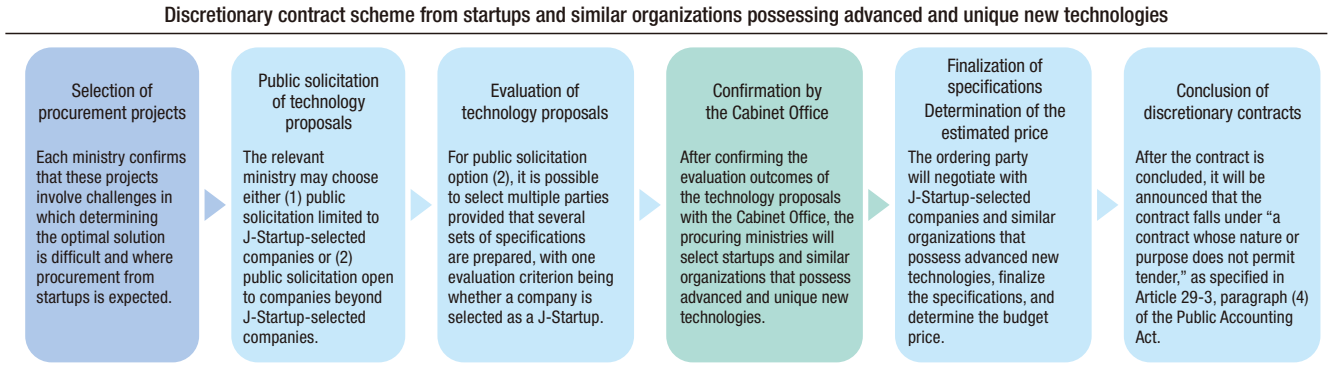
b. Startup Technology Proposal Evaluation System

In June 2024, the government made an Agreement on Discretionary Contracts with Startups Possessing Advanced and Unique New Technologies (Startup Technology Proposal Evaluation System) in order to enable discretionary contracts with startups and other companies possessing advanced and unique new technologies. The MOD concluded a contract applying this system with Infostellar in March 2025, which was the first example of application of this system in the government.

This system is characterized by enabling discretionary contracts for administrative issues for which finding the optimal solution is difficult, after consultations to finalize the specifications with the companies that have made excellent proposals.

See Fig. IV-2-1-4 (The Flow of Discretionary Contracts in the Startup Technology Proposal Evaluation System)

Fig. IV-2-1-4 The Flow of Discretionary Contracts in the Startup Technology Proposal Evaluation System



VOICE

Voice from Private Companies: Startup Company—Infostellar: Applying Commercial Cloud-Based Ground Station Technology to Defense and Contributing to Space Domain Awareness

KURAHARA Naomi, CEO and Representative Director, Infostellar

Infostellar develops and operates StellarStation, a platform that enables integrated cloud-based use of ground communications facilities (ground stations) for communicating with satellites. StellarStation abstracts operations of ground stations owned by different operators with different specifications and interfaces, including usage reservations, antenna control, communications link establishment, and data transfer, thereby enabling flexible operations that are not dependent on physical facilities.

In the space domain, the increasing number of satellites and growing congestion in orbit in recent years have made it essential to strengthen Space Domain Awareness (SDA). In addition to identifying the positions and orbits of space objects, SDA refers to gaining an understanding of the operational and utilization status, intentions, and capabilities of artificial satellites and the like. Our company concluded a contract with the Ministry of Defense under the Startup Technology Proposal Evaluation System and is advancing efforts to apply the cloud-based ground station integration technology we have cultivated in the private sector to SDA, including detecting signs of anomalies and identifying changes in the communications environment.

Our experience in entering the defense field has made us realize that there may be more civilian technologies with potential defense applications than we had imagined. While there are examples of cutting-edge technologies developed in the defense field being transferred to civilian applications, we felt that the reverse could also occur in many cases. For startups entering the defense field, I believe the first important step is to put into words how their core technologies can contribute to solving security challenges. In our case, putting our ideas into words, explaining them to the Ministry of Defense, and engaging in dialogue enabled us to understand where our assumptions were accurate and where they differed, allowing us to refine our proposal. While challenges remain in translating these efforts into actual procurement as defense equipment, including security and compliance requirements, I believe that the speed and flexibility fostered in the private sector can also serve as major strengths in the defense field. Going forward, I believe that the role played by startups as new players supporting both security and industrial competitiveness will continue to expand.



Antenna used to communicate with satellites

c. Establishment of the Defense Startup Award in the Nippon Startup Awards

The Nippon Startup Awards aim to honor outstanding startups for their creation of new businesses with a socially positive impact that may provide role models for people in the next generation. By doing this, it raises public awareness of the importance of proactively taking on challenges and disseminates evaluation results about entrepreneurs, thereby encouraging people throughout society to take on new challenges. For the Nippon Startup Awards 2025, the MOD Minister's Award (Defense Startup Award) was established to honor startups that have contributed to the creation of future innovations in and development of the defense area, and Synspective Inc. received this award.

Companies that have received Nippon Startup Awards will be included in the scope of applications in the case that recruitment is limited to J-Startup selected companies in the Startup Technology Proposal Evaluation System, and in addition preferential treatment equivalent to that of J-Startup selected companies will be taken, such as receiving extra points in the examination of their technology proposals.

d. Establishment of "Fast-Track Procurement"

In February 2026, the MOD unveiled its "fast-track procurement" initiative, which promotes the utilization of flexible contracting systems to facilitate the rapid adoption of technologies developed by startups and other companies,

VOICE

Voice from Private Companies: Startup Company—Synspective

ARAI Motoyuki, Founder & CEO, Synspective Inc.

Founded in 2018, Synspective is a startup whose mission is "to create a new infrastructure that enables the next generation to understand our Earth and achieve a resilient future." Our company conducts an integrated range of activities from the development and operation of our own Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) satellites to solution services through data analysis. The core of our business leverages the unique characteristics of SAR, which can gather data regardless of the time of day or weather conditions. We then go beyond the mere provision of that data by transforming it into practical intelligence that directly supports customer decision-making. We aim to build a constellation of 30 SAR satellites from 2028 onward, and we are advancing our business toward becoming essential infrastructure on par with energy and communications.

In today's international community, discussions on the use of space are shifting toward the need to ensure that states have the capability to access reliable space-based data independently and stably. Rather than having governments bear this responsibility on their own, a new form of public-private partnership—where governments maintain strategic direction while private companies provide speed and innovation—is now becoming the global standard. This is a logical new model of public-private cooperation that enables the government to maintain strategic control while fully leveraging the development speed and innovation of the private sector. In light of this trend, we view Synspective's technology contributing to resilience in the form of national security as a natural development of our business. The satellite constellation development contract concluded with the Ministry of Defense in February 2026 gave significant credibility and feasibility to our long-term vision and marked an extremely important first step embodying this new partnership.

As a company seeking to enter the defense industry, it is essential to clearly demonstrate how our technologies can meet specific security requirements. The Japanese government is also accelerating investment in this field as a national strategy, including through the Space Strategy Fund. This endeavor provides an excellent opportunity to elevate our company into a trusted partner at the national level and establish competitiveness in the global market. In addition, the opportunity to take on the extremely important challenge of national security also has the appeal to attract top talent from around the world.

As a global company that provides new insights from space as intelligence, we will contribute to Japan's security and the stable use of outer space, while continuing our challenge toward the realization of a resilient future for the next generation.



SAR satellite constellation (image)

in order to fully promote the utilization of startup companies.

Specifically, the MOD has carried out (i) utilization of the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program, a government-wide scheme that supports research and development by startups and other companies, to encourage research and development taking into account the operational needs of the JSDF, (ii) further utilization of the Startup Technology Proposal Evaluation System, (iii) systematization of agile procurement under which the units and companies work together with the aim of implementing the feedback cycle and achieving rapid equipment deployment, and in addition (iv) establishment of the Startup Utilization Accompaniment Support Group to develop systems for implementing end-to-end accompaniment support, including matching startups with the operational needs of the JSDF and resolving obstacles that may arise when contracts are concluded.

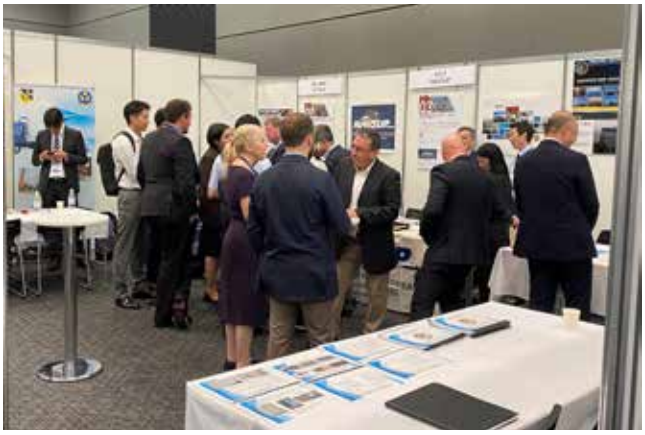
(3) Industry Day

Since 2022, an exhibition (Industry Day) has been held to create matching opportunities with the U.S. Forces and the U.S. defense industry in order to encourage Japanese companies to participate in the equipment supply chains common to both Japan and the United States as well as in the sustainment and maintenance programs of the U.S. Forces in the Indo-Pacific Region. In 2025, the exhibition was

held in Tokyo in September. Then Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense Kobayashi attended this exhibition, where he emphasized the importance of matching opportunities between Japan's defense industry and the U.S. Forces and U.S. defense industry.

Furthermore, in February 2026, a public-private matching event concerning the repair of U.S. ships was held in Sasebo City, Nagasaki Prefecture, where opinions were exchanged between the U.S. Navy and a total of 16 Japanese companies, including local companies.

See Chapter 4, 6 (Advancing Initiatives Aimed at Effectiveness of Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Procurement)



Industry Day (September 2025)

3 Building a Resilient Supply Chain

(1) Security of Supply Arrangement

In 2023, the Security of Supply Arrangement (SoSA) was signed. This Arrangement serves as a framework for the stable and reciprocal supply of defense equipment (including not only final products but also their parts and services) between Japan and the United States. It will contribute to building a resilient and diverse supply chain for defense equipment.

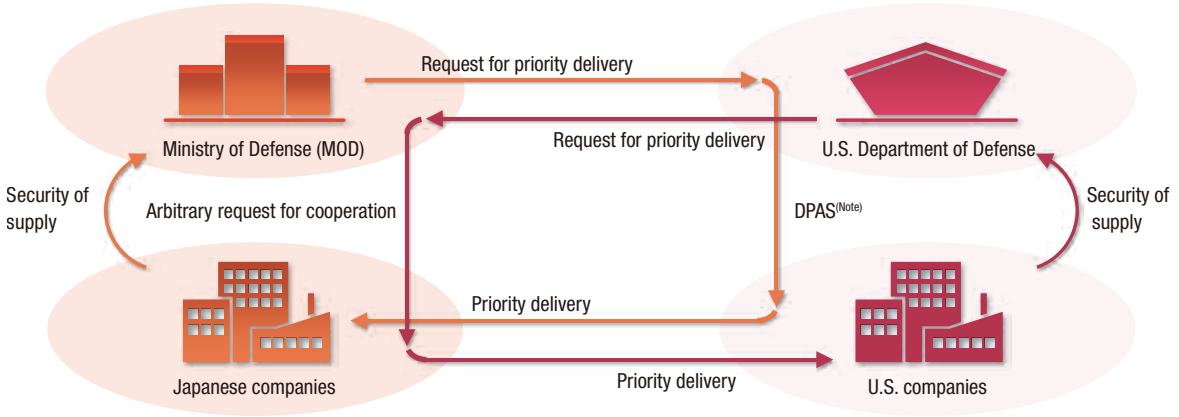
By having Japanese companies participate in this framework, delays in the delivery of U.S. products used in equipment for the JSDF that these companies manufacture may be resolved. In addition, sharing of the participating companies' registration information with the United States could also lead to them being recognized as trustworthy Japanese companies in the United States.

See Fig. IV-2-1-5 (Security of Supply Arrangement (SoSA))

(2) Formulation of the Guidelines for Promoting Fair Trade Practices

Given the situation that withdrawals from defense businesses occur intermittently, ATLA and METI jointly formulated the Guidelines for Promoting for Fair Trade Practices in Defense Industry in March 2025. The Guidelines were formulated as part of initiatives to strengthen the foundation of the entire supply chain. Their purpose is to maximize the corporate value of all the trading partners comprising the defense industry

Fig. IV-2-1-5 Security of Supply Arrangement (SoSA)



(Note) DPAS (Defense Priorities and Allocations System): A system under which the U.S. Department of Defense obligates U.S. companies to prioritize national defense-related contracts and orders under the U.S. Defense Production Act of 1950.

REFERENCE: ATLA Website: Promoting entry into the defense industry
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/atla/soubiseisaku_newentry.html

by appropriately passing on labor costs and other expenses while securing the necessary profits. The Guidelines organize the characteristics of the defense industry, list examples of transaction-related complaints from businesses that are thought to stem from each of those characteristics, and then organize the points to note in transactions and desirable trading methods, thereby encouraging the promotion of fair trading practices and the healthy development of the entire industry.

4 Strengthening Defense Industrial Security

At a time when the international joint research, development, and production of equipment is accelerating, the threat of cyberattacks and information theft is growing more serious, so Japan's defense industry is required to have robust, international-standard information security systems.

In order to respond to these challenges, ATLA established the Defense Industrial Security Certification Program in June 2025. This Program fundamentally revises the confidentiality contracts that were previously attached to each procurement contract. Under this system, a single unified security contract is concluded at the facility level based on the certification of its security system. This significantly accelerates and rationalizes complex administrative procedures, and makes it easier for companies to prove globally that their own security levels are on a par with international standards.

Moreover, in May 2025, a subcommittee meeting of the Multinational Industrial Security Working Group (MISWG) comprised of 43 countries and institutions was hosted in Tokyo, and in addition the initiatives of Japan were actively communicated in its annual plenary meeting in September of the same year.

Through these initiatives, opportunities for participation in international joint development are expected to expand, contributing to the international competitiveness of Japanese companies.

Furthermore, regarding information that is not classified but requires appropriate protection, information security standards for the procurement of equipment and services at the same level as the U.S. Department of Defense's NIST SP800-171 were applied from April 2023. ATLA collaborates closely with defense-related businesses to thoroughly implement information management measures that directly address threats and to improve their rationality. As of March 2026, more than 100 domestic defense-related businesses have modified or newly introduced information systems. ATLA will continue to strongly promote the strengthening of information security levels across the entire defense industry, the enhancement of its international credibility, and the establishment of a sustainable defense industrial base.

See Part III, Chapter 1, Section 2-4-2 (2) b. (Security Enhancement)

KEY WORD **Defense Industrial Security**

Contractors (defense industry) that have entered into contracts for the research and development, procurement, or supply of equipment, or for the provision of services related to equipment used by the MOD/JSDF, are required to take necessary security measures to protect Classified Information when handling such information.

KEY WORD **Defense Industrial Security Certification Program**

A program that assesses whether contractors who are interested in participating in defense projects have the organizational structure required to fulfill contracts which include handling of classified information before conclusion of contract.

5 Strengthening Management of Sensitive Technologies

When transferring sensitive defense equipment, technological sensitivity is evaluated based on the technology's importance and superiority, and efforts are being made to prevent leakage of highly sensitive technologies, such as promoting reverse engineering measures.

In the context of the international competition surrounding cutting-edge technologies intensifying in recent years, the MOD is analyzing cutting-edge technologies from the perspective of defense technology experts, working to identify and understand key technologies, and working with our ally and others to promote collaboration in technology analysis. Furthermore, regarding the system of non-disclosure of selected patent applications, which is one of the economic security measures, and inward direct investment, the MOD is collaborating and cooperating with relevant ministries and agencies from the perspective of preventing technology leakage. In addition, it has revised the rules to enable utilization of the system of non-disclosure of selected patent applications to allow patent applications for inventions that previously could not be applied for from a security perspective because they fall under the category of information that needs to be protected.

6 Communication and Other Initiatives

The Minister of Defense and presidents of companies in the defense industry (major prime contractors) have gathered to exchange their views, and the fourth round table discussion was held in July 2025. In addition, the MOD has continued to strengthen public-private cooperation and coordination

through sharing problems and challenges that both sides have identified by holding eight meetings so far to exchange views between the Commissioner of ATLA and the heads of the defense divisions of various companies.

VOICE

Initiatives in the Defense Industry and Utilization of the Defense Industrial Security Certification Program Established 2025

MORI Hideo, General Manager, National Security Business Department, SHIFT Inc. / CEO and Representative Director, Japan Aerospace & Defense Consulting Inc.

Since its founding, SHIFT has provided a range of services to ensure the system reliability and safety centered on software quality assurance and testing. To leverage our expertise we have cultivated, to national defense field, we established the National Security Business Division in 2024, followed by Japan Aerospace & Defense Consulting Inc. (JADC) in 2025 as a specialized organization dedicated to the defense domain and realized our full-scale entry into the defense business.

To date, our company has participated in projects including "information to be protected." However, projects involving more confidential "classified information" entailed complex security procedures conducted for each contract, leading entry barriers. The newly established Defense Industrial Security Certification Program is an epoch-making program that addresses such barriers, and we regard it as an "information security passport" that enables agile technology provision in the defense area.

Leveraging this program, we will contribute to strengthening the defense base and revitalizing the defense industry by promptly connecting our advanced technological capabilities to defense buildup. Under the guiding principle of "Defending the Defenders," we are dedicated to safeguarding the nation's security through our unwavering support for both public and private sectors.



Mr. Mori (left) and Mr. SAWADA Yoshihiro (right), who also holds the position of Unit Manager of Service Unit, National Security Business Department, SHIFT Inc. / Director, Japan Aerospace & Defense Consulting Inc.

REFERENCE: ATLA Website: Information security standards for the procurement of defense equipment and services
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/atla/cybersecurity.html

REFERENCE: ATLA Website: Defense Industrial Security Manual
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/atla/industrialsecurity/index.html

Section 2 Reinforcing Defense Technology Base

1 Necessity of Reinforcing Defense Technology Base

In order to acquire defense equipment and the like required for 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 science and technology capabilities 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 held back by existing approaches is an essential activity for strengthening Japan's architecture for national defense.

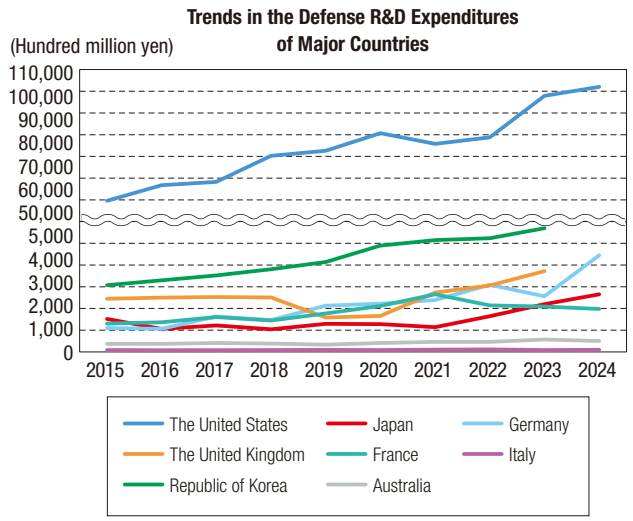
As competition among major countries intensifies in terms of conducting research on cutting-edge science and technologies and leveraging those results for applications in national security, each country has focused on reinforcing its defense technology base for the purpose of national security by investing heavily in R&D aimed at the early operationalization of technologies that could become so-called "game changers" which dramatically alter the future character of warfare.

Although Japan's research and development expenditures for the MOD have trailed those of the United States and other countries, they have increased significantly in recent years due to their importance. On the other hand, while the distinction between technologies developed for civilian use and for security purposes has become increasingly blurred, it is important to work strategically to ensure technological superiority as a nation by actively leveraging the results of research and development in science and technology in Japan's public and private sectors for the research and development of equipment. Therefore, it is necessary to further promote research and development domestically and develop and strengthen the defense technology base for the technology areas on which Japan should focus.

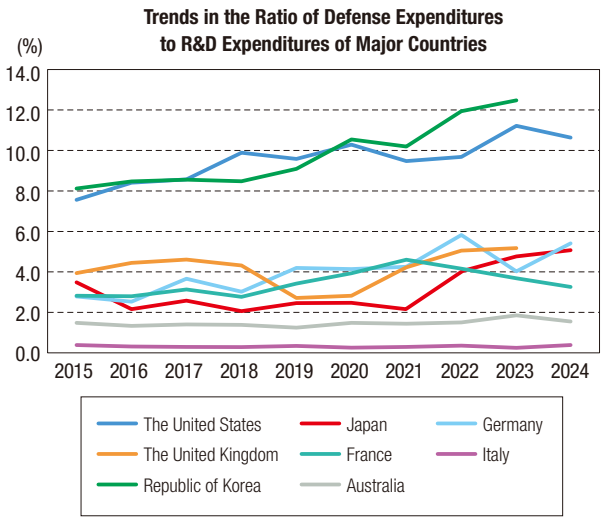
In the cases of defense equipment and technology cooperation, such as equipment procurement and international joint development, it is important to maintain the leading role by owning important cutting-edge and other technologies. Considering ways to keep costs down taking into account the possibility of procurement and transfer of

Fig. IV-2-2-1 Current Status of Research and Development Expenditures

As of March 13, 2026



Source: "OECD: Main Science and Technology Indicators"



Source: "OECD: Main Science and Technology Indicators"
"SIPRI Military Expenditure Database ©SIPRI 2024"

(Notes) 1 Defense R&D expenditures of each country are calculated from R&D expenditures and defense-related budget ratios of each country listed under "OECD: Main Science and Technology Indicators." However, the data for China is not included.
2 The figures are according to OECD statistics, and definitions may differ from country to country; therefore, attention is needed when comparing countries using just this data.
3 The data until 2024 is listed for the United States, Australia, and Germany, which was available as of March 13, 2026.

defense equipment after development is important. This requires not only research and development by the MOD, but also the promotion of research and development by both the public and private sectors together.

See Fig. IV-2-2-1 (Current Status of Research and Development Expenditures); Part I, Chapter 4, Section 4 (Trends Concerning Defense Production and Technological Bases)

2 Direction for Reinforcing Defense Technology Base Shown in Defense Technology Guideline 2023

The National Security Strategy of Japan, National Defense Strategy, and Defense Buildup Program all state the necessity of reinforcing the defense technology base and call for the active utilization of Japan's advanced technology research results by both its public and private sectors for the research and development of equipment and the strengthening of the framework for the research and development of new equipment. In June 2023, the MOD formulated the Defense Technology Guideline 2023 to embody the policy of reinforcing the defense technology base and serve as a guideline for the MOD to promote various initiatives in an integrated and powerful manner. The MOD publishes this Guideline to improve the predictability of our partners, foster a common understanding of reinforcing the defense technology base, and establish a foundation to promote technological cooperation actively. A summary of the Guideline is given below.

See Reference 73 (Defense Technology Guideline 2023 (Executive Summary))

1 Current Status and Challenges of Defense Technology Base

Rapid advances in science and technology have added to Japan's economic and social development. These changes are also significantly impacting the national security environment and changing the face of warfare. As a result, we may fail to protect Japan's peace and independence and maintain national security by simply continuing to improve the capabilities of our equipment systems. To respond to this tense security environment, it is necessary to spin on Japan's Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) capabilities, maximize their use for security and defense purposes, and spin off the outcomes of the MOD's R&D back to society. To achieve the defense of our nation at all times, R&D at the MOD now necessitates taking new approaches and implementing methods different from those used in the past.

2 Vision for the Future Through Reinforcement of Defense Technology Base

The MOD/JSDF need sufficient defense capabilities in order to defend Japan. The purpose of reinforcing the defense technology base is to provide the necessary technological support. Therefore, the future vision in Defense Technology Guideline 2023 is always to defend our nation through technology.

3 Approaches to Realize This Vision

(1) 1st Pillar: Accelerating delivery of functions and equipment necessary for the defense of Japan

The MOD will accelerate the development of the functions and equipment necessary to defend Japan, which are directly linked to the future ways of warfare, and deliver them in 5 years or within approximately the next 10 years.

(2) 2nd Pillar: Ensuring technological superiority and creating advanced capabilities

Over the 10 years and beyond, the MOD will expand the community involved in defense-related R&D through public-private collaboration, bringing together Japan's scientific, technological, and innovative strengths to continue to create innovative features and capabilities. This will not only fundamentally strengthen our defense capabilities, but also achieve defense innovations that will transform society, ensuring Japan's technological superiority for the future and realizing advanced capabilities that put Japan ahead of other countries.

4 Means to Realize This Vision

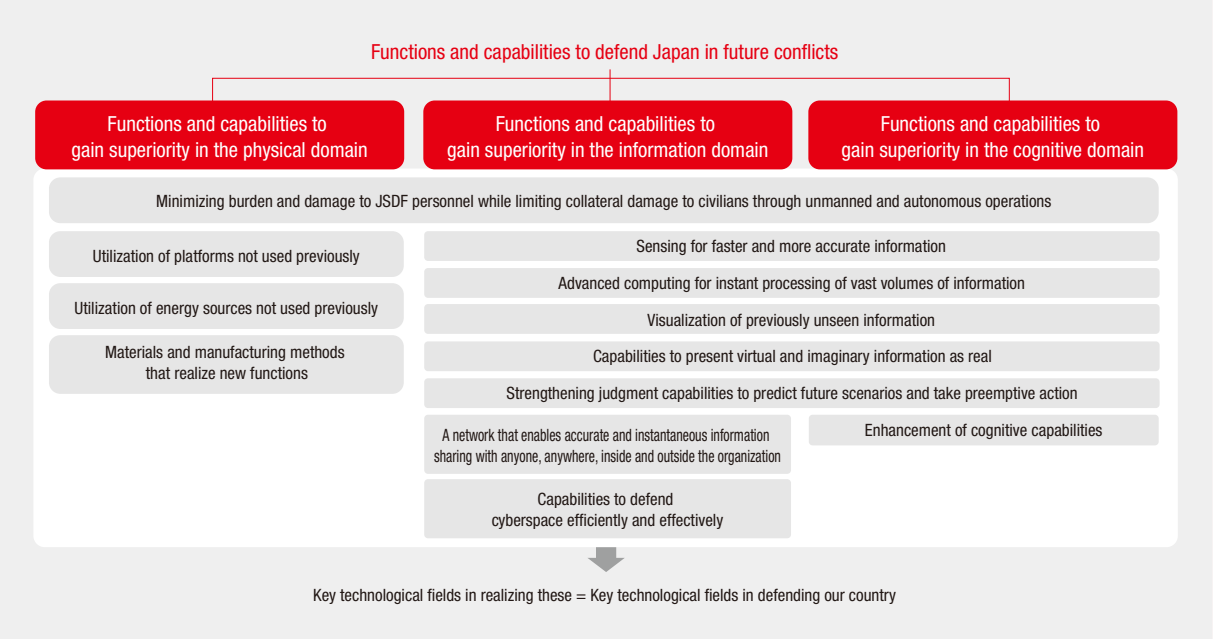
To achieve the 1st and 2nd pillars, it is necessary to "create" the functions and equipment that the MOD/JSDF require, "nurture" technologies strategically, and "understand" various aspects of science and technology. These efforts will be carried out with relevant ministries and agencies, research institutes, industries, and academia to build an ecosystem and framework that will allow us to continue to grow together, collaborating in a sustainable, autonomous, and comfortable manner while creating synergies and ensuring technology preservation.

5 Important Technology Areas for the Defense of Japan

The MOD is considering the functions and capabilities necessary for defending our nation at all times. It is breaking them down to specify the important technology areas to achieve these functions and capabilities.

See Fig. IV-2-2-2 (Functions and Capabilities Important for Defending Japan)

Fig. IV-2-2-2 Functions and Capabilities Important for Defending Japan



3 Active Utilization of Civilian Technology

1 Collaboration with Domestic and International Related Organizations

Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) and domestic research institutes such as national research and development agencies proactively engage in research collaborations and technological information exchanges in order to ensure that Japan's advanced technologies are incorporated and that research and development is conducted efficiently.

Domestically, based on the Integrated Innovation Strategy 2025 (Cabinet Decision on June 6, 2025), the MOD has been collaborating closely from peacetime with relevant ministries and agencies, including the Cabinet Office, in order to create superior equipment through the utilization of cutting-edge technologies and conduct research and development efficiently and effectively. The ministry also actively participates in the Council for Integrated Innovation Strategy Promotion[1] established to promote the strategy in order to further enhance collaboration with relevant ministries and agencies, national research and development agencies, industry, universities, and other parties.

In addition, it is effective to promote communications between the relevant ministries and agencies that promote

REFERENCE: Defense Technology Guideline 2023—To defend our nation at all times with technologies
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/atla/guideline2023

1 Meeting of all Ministers of State under the leadership of the Chief Cabinet Secretary for the checking, sorting, cross-sectoral and substantial coordination, and promotion of items that are included in the Integrated Innovation Strategy 2025 (Cabinet Decision on June 6, 2025) and which require coordination between the control towers related to innovation.

civilian-based initiatives, and the MOD. The National Security Strategy states that Japan will strengthen the system to utilize, in a whole-of-government manner, funds and information related to research and development. In addition, "organic integration of science and technology with security" was presented in the 7th Science, Technology, and Innovation Basic Plan decided by the Cabinet in March 2026, which includes the promotion of research and development into dual-use technologies and the building of an ecosystem in the security area. It is important for the entire government to work together based on these strategies.

Specifically, the Government will intensively offer strong support for cutting-edge technology with multiple applications, such as AI and quantum technology, through programs, such as the Key and Advanced Technology R&D through Cross Community Collaboration Program (K-Program). The research and development results obtained will smoothly reinforce security-related areas. Furthermore, a cross-governmental framework was established to expedite the development of technologies with the potential to contribute to strengthening comprehensive defense architecture by matching the research and development needs of the MOD with the technology seeds possessed by the relevant ministries and agencies. In this initiative, the research by the relevant ministries and agencies for the purpose of civilian use that is to be promoted for the time being as technological issues which contribute to strengthening comprehensive defense architecture has been organized into "important technological challenges" and of these the projects that have value for development are approved as "matching projects."

Moreover, in order to advance science and technology in Japan's defense field, the MOD will continue to actively promote technological and engineer exchanges with allies and like-minded countries, as well as consider diverse possibilities through continued exchange of opinions at various opportunities.

See Fig. IV-2-2-3 (Research Collaboration with National Research and Development Agencies and the Like); Section 3 (Initiatives for Economic Security); Part III, Chapter 1, Section 3 (Reinforcing the Defense Architecture of the Whole Country)

Fig. IV-2-2-3 Research Collaboration with National Research and Development Agencies and the Like

Partner	Collaboration Fields
Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)	Aerospace field
National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT)	Electronics, information and communications field
National Institute of Maritime, Port and Aviation Technology	Naval ship area
Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC)	Marine field
Yamaguchi Prefectural Industrial Technology Institute	Unmanned underwater vehicle field
National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology	—

2 Identification, Development and Incorporation of Innovative Cutting-Edge Civilian Technologies

The active utilization of advanced civilian technologies is essential for securing the lives and peaceful livelihoods of Japanese nationals into the future. In addition, investing in defense areas is beneficial for the development of Japan's science, technology, and innovation, similar to how investment in innovative science and technology by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) of the United States facilitated advances in science and technology as a whole, including the development of the Internet and the Global Positioning System (GPS). From this perspective, the MOD intends to promote relevant measures.

Specifically, the MOD has implemented the MOD Basic Research Support Initiative (MOD funding), a competitive research funding program to publicly seek basic research in target areas, which is expected to contribute to future research and development in defense areas. From among research proposals widely seeking from universities, research institutes, and startup companies, a total of 239 research projects have been awarded as of FY2025. In the same fiscal year, in addition to the previous commissioned projects, the MOD established a new subsidy project to support the independent activities of researchers. Furthermore, the MOD expanded the scope of application of multi-fiscal year contracts to enable more flexible research to be conducted, and improved the system to make it easier for applicants to apply. The system is also being broadened through measures such as adding medical care and biomedical engineering to the list of solicitation themes, reflecting their expected contributions to areas such as physical trauma care and PTSD countermeasures.

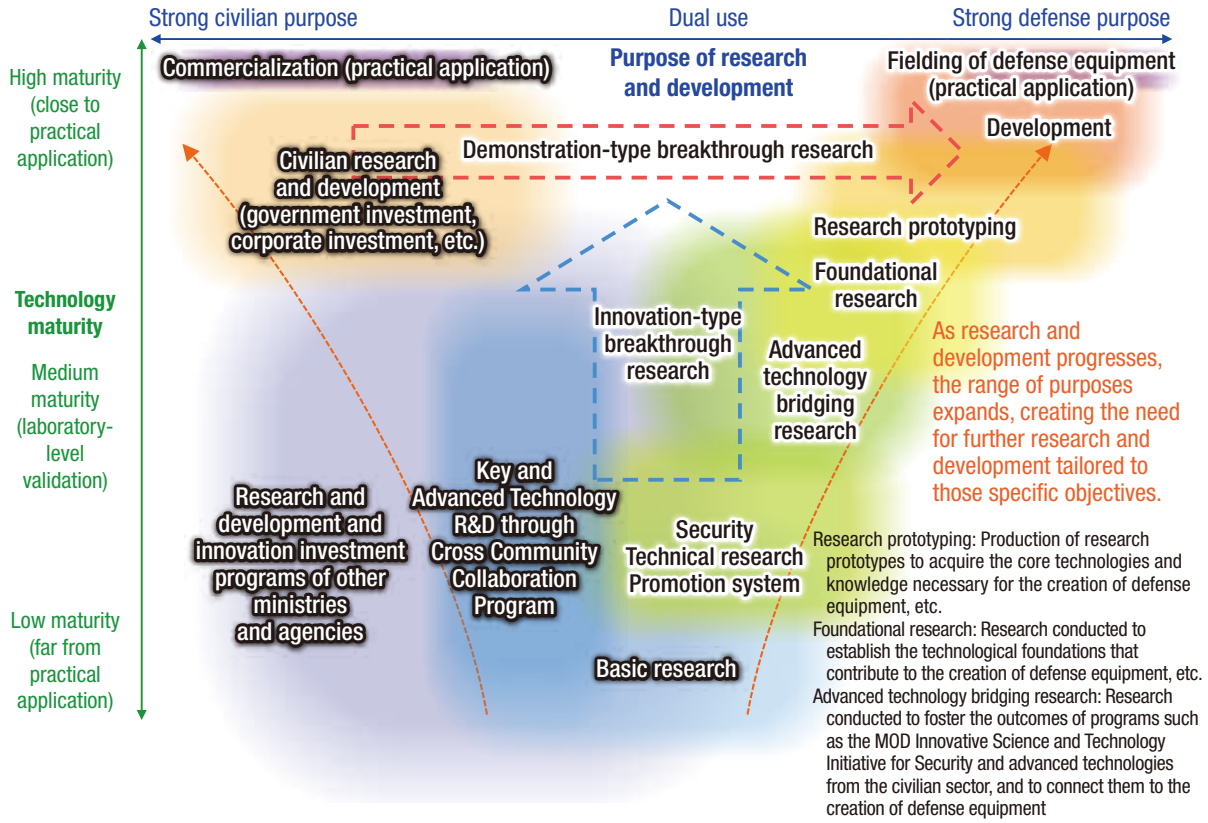
In the basic research areas, free thinking of researchers leads to innovative and creative results. For this reason, it is necessary to assign maximum value to freedom of research when sponsoring research, so that, for example, researchers will be able to publish all of their research results to have a wide range of academic discussions. Therefore, under this program, the MOD does not intervene in research, restrict the publication of research results, designate the confidentiality of research results, or provide confidential information to researchers. Also, since cooperation with start-up companies and research institutes in Japan is essential for identifying and developing cutting-edge civilian technologies, we will encourage the broad participation of leading researchers, including those from academic circles, while obtaining the understanding and cooperation from the relevant parties.

Furthermore, we have been implementing Cutting-edge Technology Bridging Research since FY2020 in order to quickly discover and nurture cutting-edge technologies obtained through government science and technology investments, including the Innovative Science & Technology

Initiative for Security, as well as cutting-edge technologies from civilian sectors, and connect them to the creation of defense equipment.

See Reference 74 (FY2025 Awarded Research Projects for the "Innovative Science & Technology Initiative for Security" Program)
See Fig. IV-2-2-4 (The MOD's Initiatives to Promote Research and Development)

Fig. IV-2-2-4 The MOD's Initiatives to Promote Research and Development



VOICE

Voice of a Researcher

ADACHI Chihaya, Professor, Kyushu University

I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to stay in the United States on two occasions. The first was a research stay at the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) in Washington, D.C. in the summer of 1997. While NRL conducts highly sensitive military research, it is also a research institution that places extremely strong emphasis on basic science. Since the 1980s, it had been steadily advancing research aimed at the future development of molecular-level electronics. In particular, fundamental research on organic photoelectric conversion elements and organic electroluminescence (OLED) was positioned as a strategically important theme, not only because of its potential applications in future lightweight and flexible display devices, but also because of its high potential as a new class of electronic and optical functional material. The atmosphere within the laboratory contrasted with the strict image associated with military research institutions. It was open and lively, much like a university laboratory, and provided an environment for researchers to actively engage in discussions across different fields. The heads of the research groups were leading scholars in their respective fields, and through academic society activities

and international joint research, they helped bridge the gap between basic science and applied research. This experience made me keenly aware that the continuation of fundamental research from a long-term perspective is indispensable to the advancement of science and technology.

My second stay in the United States was during my postdoctoral research period at Princeton University from 1999 to 2001. Princeton, as well, received research funding from the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and the U.S. Air Force, and research and development on OLEDs and organic semiconductor lasers was being strongly promoted at the basic science stage. These funds served as an important pillar supporting the core of university research and enabled ambitious research aimed at creating new electronic materials and optical functional devices. I was deeply impressed with the way research linked to national strategy was naturally integrated within the free academic environment of a university.

There is not necessarily a clear boundary between military research and research and development for civilian technology. Rather, the two are complementary, influencing each other while supporting human scientific and technological progress. New materials, devices, and applications are often born out of fundamental research, and in the process of being developed toward social implementation, they become linked with national and industrial frameworks. These experiences have made me strongly aware of the importance of basic science and applied research functioning side by side. I would like to express my deep gratitude for the opportunity to receive research funding from the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency and to be able to advance new research developments in the field of organic devices. I intend to use this support as a catalyst to further devote myself to creating innovative research outcomes that are grounded in basic science and lead to future social implementation.



Professor ADACHI Chihaya, Kyushu University

3 Establishment of a New Research Institute

In October 2024, the Defense Innovation Science and Technology Institute (Shibuya City, Tokyo) was established under ATLA to fundamentally reinforce capabilities that create defense innovations and groundbreaking equipment. The Institute conducts breakthrough research to create functions and technologies that will reinforce defense capabilities and lead to social change from a variety of rapidly evolving science and technology by actively introducing new approaches and methods.

Breakthrough research is intended to fundamentally strengthen the foundations for generating defense innovation and groundbreaking equipment. The Institute conducts disruptive breakthrough research based on the flexible thinking of program managers with extensive knowledge of civilian science and technology. This research aims to create innovative and groundbreaking functions and technologies that are not merely extensions of existing approaches but can fundamentally strengthen defense capabilities or transform the way society works. In addition, the Institute conducts spin-on-based breakthrough research, which combines various cutting-edge technologies held by companies and other entities at the practical application stage in order to rapidly create capabilities required by the MOD/JSDF.

Furthermore, the Institute is aiming to build a research and development ecosystem for security, so, starting from FY2025, it has launched “co-creation activities with startups and others, the non-defense industry and research institutions” and other initiatives with the objectives of increasing the understanding of and interest in defense among startups and others in order to form security networks. This initiative involves startups collaborating with each other to create a research community, and these initiatives will be further strengthened in FY2026.

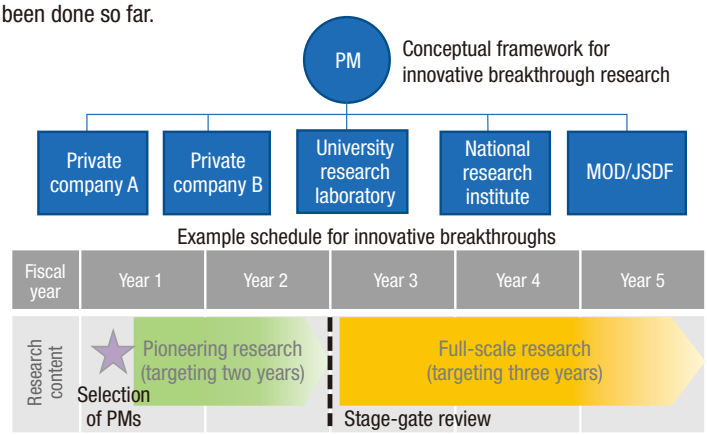
See Fig. IV-2-2-5 (Breakthrough Research)

REFERENCE: Innovative Science & Technology Initiative for Security (MOD funding)
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/atla/funding.html

Fig. IV-2-2-5 Breakthrough Research

○Innovation-type breakthrough research

To create innovative and groundbreaking functions and technologies that fundamentally strengthen the defense capabilities or change the nature of society, we conduct research under the flexible thinking of program managers, rather than merely extending what has been done so far.

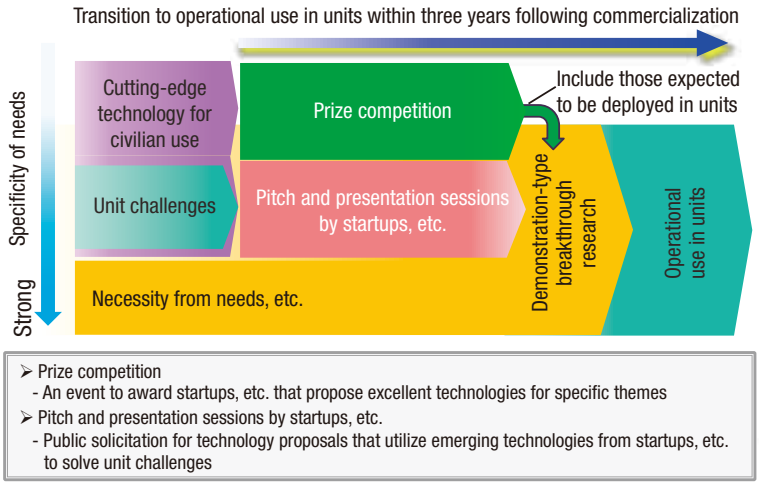


Construction of AI system for sensor data recognition through self-supervised learning



○Demonstration-type breakthrough research

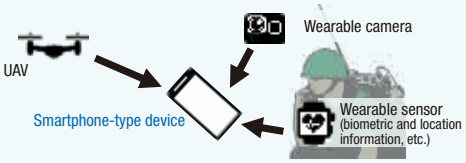
By combining various technologies at different practical stages held by companies, we conduct research to rapidly create the capabilities required by the MOD/JSDF.



➢ Prize competition
- An event to award startups, etc. that propose excellent technologies for specific themes

➢ Pitch and presentation sessions by startups, etc.
- Public solicitation for technology proposals that utilize emerging technologies from startups, etc. to solve unit challenges

Research on information integration and visualization technology that contributes to the acceleration of tactical actions



- Visualize, on a personnel information-sharing platform, the status of personnel and units as estimated by AI based on biometric data, as well as geospatial information.
- Utilize civilian hardware and middleware that has become standard in the United States, NATO, and other countries.

➢ Support unit commanders in quickly and accurately recognizing information pertaining to personnel and their surrounding environments.

4 New Measures for Early Deployment

For programs that are particularly urgent and significant from a policy perspective in areas that could directly affect the JSDF's current and future ways of warfare, while extensively soliciting outstanding proposals from companies, and incorporating cutting-edge civilian technologies, the MOD is working to achieve the early deployment of defense equipment through demonstration experiments. Note that a system has been built under which information on cutting-edge civilian technologies proposed by companies is received and centrally collated at the One-Stop Window for Early Deployment of Defense Equipment established within ATLA, and then provided to the appropriate organizations.

REFERENCE: MOD Website: Initiatives for Early Deployment of Cutting-Edge Technologies
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/budget/rapid_acquisition/index.html

4 Establishment of the Defense Science and Technology Board

The MOD/JSDF have executed their missions in a limited and restrained manner, taking into account historical circumstances and various post-war constraints. For this reason, a broader perspective encompassing the security of the entire nation and the enhancement of national strength has not been sufficiently cultivated. As a result, there has been a tendency to place importance on considerations based on internal JSDF requirements, such as the functionality and performance of equipment. Nonetheless, given the current situation that the MOD's role and budget size within the overall government have expanded in recent years, this is insufficient and going forward it will become increasingly important to also incorporate the perspective of how the development of science and technology through the development of defense capabilities can contribute to the development of the entire nation.

Given these challenges, establishment of a broad outlook that also considers the ripple effects on the entire nation is essential when considering the various challenges related to science, technology, and security that the MOD will face going forward. For that reason, there is a need to build a structure to foster cooperation not just within the MOD but also with diverse external entities and a broad community so that the enhancement of science and technology capabilities through the development of defense capabilities contributes to the enhancement of Japan's overall national strength, and a need to build a system to support this structure.

Against this backdrop, the Defense Science and Technology Board (DSTB) was established in June 2025 as a permanent body to provide necessary advice and recommendations to the Defense Minister on various challenges related to science, technology, and security. The DSTB is composed of academics, practitioners, and others with expertise in science and technology, primarily in fields such as AI, space, and cybersecurity. A total of six meetings of the DSTB had been held by March 2026.

Section 3 Initiatives for Economic Security

1 Basic Concept

The National Security Strategy states that economic security is to ensure Japan's national interests, such as peace, security, and economic prosperity, by carrying out economic measures. In the face of various threats imposed through economic means, Japan needs to comprehensively, effectively, and intensively execute necessary economic measures to enhance Japan's autonomy and to secure the superiority and indispensability concerning our technologies and others.

2 Developments Within the Japanese Government

To date, Japan has promoted initiatives that contribute to strengthening economic security within its existing legal framework.

In May 2022, the Economic Security Promotion Act[1] was established to comprehensively and effectively promote economic measures related to ensuring national security. The act developed frameworks for strengthening the resilience of supply chains, ensuring the safety and reliability of critical infrastructure, public-private collaboration on important cutting-edge technologies, and non-disclosure of selected patent applications.

In May 2024, systems for the non-disclosure of patent applications and core infrastructure became operational, and all systems stipulated by the law were put into operation. Various measures related to economic security are constantly being reviewed and revised in order to ensure their effectiveness. For example, in December 2022, 11 resources, including semiconductors and storage batteries, were designated as specific important resources to strengthen the resilience of supply chains. In February 2024, advanced electronic components (capacitors and high-frequency filters) were added to the list, bringing the total number to 12. In addition, uranium was added as a target mineral within the category of important minerals, which had already been designated as a specific important resource. Moreover, in December 2025, four resources, including UAVs and artificial satellites, were newly designated, bringing the total to 16 resources, with the aim of securing a stable supply.

The Key and Advanced Technology R&D through Cross Community Collaboration Program (K Program) is led by the relevant government ministries and agencies. The K Program implements research and development projects on advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), quantum technology, and others, to meet the country's needs. The results of the research are intended for not only civilian use but also for public use, including for national security. The key technologies to be supported by the K Program have been defined in the R&D vision, and their research and development is under way accordingly. In addition, councils for designated funds, which are forums for information sharing and exchanges of views aimed at the steady implementation of the results of the research and development and achievement of the R&D vision, are also being established in sequence. In addition, regarding the security clearance system in the economic security field, the Act on the Protection and Utilization of Critical Economic Security Information was enforced in May 2025.

Moreover, in recent years, various discussions have been held among allies and like-minded countries. At the G7 Kananaskis Summit held in June of the same year, it was affirmed that the G7 and its partner countries would continue to work in close coordination on addressing issues related to strengthening the resilience of and diversifying supply chains for important minerals, and other issues.

See Section 2-3-1 (Collaboration with Domestic and International Related Organizations)

3 Initiatives of the MOD

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 resilience of supply chains, preserving and fostering advanced technologies as well as maintaining and reinforcing Japan's defense production and technological bases as a virtually integral part of defense capability itself in accordance with the National Defense Strategy.

1 Act on the Promotion of Ensuring National Security Through Integrated Implementation of Economic Measures

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. Specifically, the MOD dispatches personnel to the Office of the Director-General for Policy Planning on Economic Security in the Cabinet Office, and it participates in the councils for designated funds of the K Program in order to proactively offer its knowledge and needs related to security to government-wide initiatives. Furthermore, the MOD also contributes to the resolution of economic security issues; for example, it collaborates with the relevant ministries and agencies toward the building of comprehensive economic security think tank functions with the National Security Secretariat as the command center.

Section 4 Defense Production and Technological Bases and Innovation

1 The Relationship Between Reinforcing Defense Capabilities and the Economy

Firstly, 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.

Japan's defense industry has a broad industrial structure consisting not only of prime contractors, but also of a wide range of suppliers/subcontractors centered on small- and medium-sized enterprises beneath them. In addition, approximately 80% to 90% of the defense budget is spent domestically. For example, it has been pointed out that more than 1,000 companies are involved in aspects such as the manufacturing and assembly of various parts for tanks and fighter jets, and more than 8,000 companies for destroyers. 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, including job creation in related industries; revitalize local economies; and create 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 to distinguish between technologies for civilian and security applications. Against this backdrop, it is generally believed that increased defense expenditures lead to increased 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. For example, technologies such as the Internet, microwave ovens, and the Global Positioning System (GPS) are now indispensable to our daily lives, yet all originated as technologies developed for military purposes that were later spun off into civilian applications. In addition, technologies gained through Japan's F-2 fighter aircraft development have been applied to civilian technologies in several fields, including medical care.

In this way, the defense industry 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.

Taking these factors into account, the Government of Japan has positioned the defense industry as one of the strategic fields for "Crisis Management Investments" and "Growth Investments" at the Council for Japan's Growth Strategy. In February 2026, the Defense Industry Working Group, co-chaired by the Defense Minister and the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, was launched to advance considerations in the defense industry field. Going forward, the Government will work closely with relevant ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, to reinforce the production base by promoting investment aimed at building the capacity to respond to increased production requests and by encouraging corporate participation. At the same time, it will reinforce the technological base through means such as developing a secure defense research base at national research and development institutes, universities, and the like in fields particularly necessary for defense, as well as by promoting research into dual-use technologies.

2 Other Initiatives With Ripple Effects Across Japan as a Whole

In addition to the above, initiatives for public infrastructure development conducted as part of reinforcement of Japan's comprehensive defense architecture are also contributing to improved convenience for civilian aircraft, ships, and the like. For example, in the case of airports, improving the reception environment at airports that serve as gateways to local regions will help accommodate the future recovery and growth of air travel demand. Moreover, measures such as promoting disaster prevention and mitigation initiatives at airports and developing runway end safety areas can help ensure aviation safety and security. In addition, in the case of ports, the development of port facilities such as wharves, sea routes,

and breakwaters will make it possible to accommodate the increasing size of ferries, RORO ships,[1] bulk cargo ships,[2] and other such vessels, as well as growing cargo demand. It will also facilitate the development of reception environments for large cruise ships and the like, ensure the safety of maritime navigation, and secure port functions during disasters. Furthermore, enabling the JSDF and others to use these facilities will also contribute to more effective responses in the event of disasters and other emergencies.

Moreover, amid today's complex international environment, unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force have extended into cyberspace, and cyberattacks causing the suspension of critical infrastructure functions and other such issues are being carried out routinely, even in the form of state-backed attacks. Given the risk that such cyber threats could have serious and even fatal impacts on the lives of Japan's citizens and on economic activities, defense against and deterrence of increasingly severe cyber threats are indispensable for enhancing the vitality and ensuring the sustainable development of Japan's economy and society, as well as for realizing a society where citizens can live safely with peace of mind. Accordingly, investment in cybersecurity can be regarded as an extremely important initiative for both the lives of Japan's citizens and the Japanese economy.

1 Roll-on/roll-off ships: Generally refers to ships designed to transport cargo-loaded vehicles that can be driven directly onto and off the ships.
2 Refers to ships capable of transporting unpackaged bulk cargo, such as granular or powdered materials.

Chapter 3

Promoting Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation and Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology

Section 1 The Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology

Based on the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and the Implementation Guidelines[1] formulated in 2014, Japan promotes defense equipment and technology cooperation with other countries in order to contribute to maintaining and reinforcing the defense production and technological bases, as well as to promoting our national security, peace contribution, and international cooperation.

The transfer of defense equipment and technology as outlined in the National Security Strategy describes that such transfer 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, to create a desirable security environment for Japan, and to provide assistance to countries that are subject to aggression in violation of international law, use of force, or threat of force. Amid the accelerating changes in the security environment surrounding Japan, no country today 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, each country must work together with allies and like-minded countries, including in the area of defense equipment. Based on this thinking, in April 2026, Japan revised the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and their Implementation Guidelines 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.

1 Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology

The transfer of defense equipment and technology overseas may be permitted when the equipment and technology do not fall under the cases for which transfers are prohibited (First Principle), fall under the cases for which transfers may be permitted and have been subject to a 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).

1 Clarification of Cases Where Transfers Are Prohibited (the First Principle)

The cases where overseas transfers of defense equipment and technology are prohibited are clarified as follows: (1) in the case of violating the obligations under treaties and other international agreements that Japan has concluded; (2) in the case of violating the obligations based on the resolution of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC); or (3) in the case of transferring to countries in conflict.

2 Limitation to Cases Where Transfers May Be Permitted as Well as Strict Examination, Notification to the UN, and Information Disclosure (Second Principle)

The cases where transfers may be permitted are limited to (1) cases that contribute to the active promotion of peace contribution and international cooperation, (2) cases that contribute to the security of Japan, or other cases. It has been decided to strictly examine the appropriateness of the destination and end user, and the extent of security concerns, while ensuring transparency. In addition, it has been decided that important cases would be deliberated at the National Security Council and along with this, information concerning

1 The term "defense equipment" is deemed appropriate for the title of "Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology," since possible articles of overseas transfers play a role in contributing to peace and international cooperation, as was seen in the example of the provision of bulldozers and other items belonging to the JSDF to disaster-stricken countries. Similarly, due to the fact that technology is also provided in addition to goods, the term "transfer" was adopted rather than "export."

the cases that were deliberated would be disclosed. Furthermore, with respect to finished products that fall under the category of "weapons"[2] as defined in the Self-Defense Forces Law, when the National Security Council determines that their transfer may be permitted and publicly announces that determination, it has been decided that the Diet shall be notified promptly.

3 Ensuring Appropriate Control regarding Extra-Purpose Use or Transfer to Third-Party Countries (the Third Principle)

Overseas transfers of defense equipment and technology will be permitted only in cases where appropriate control is ensured, and the Government will, in principle, oblige the government of the recipient country to obtain the prior consent of the Government of Japan regarding extra-purpose use and transfers to third parties. However, in cases where it is judged appropriate for the active promotion of peace contribution and international cooperation, cases involving participation in the international systems for sharing parts, and cases where parts are delivered to a licenser, appropriate control may be ensured with the confirmation of the control system at the destination.

See Reference 75 (Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology (Before Revision)); Reference 76 (Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology (After Revision)); Reference 77 (Implementation Guidelines for the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology (Before Revision)); Reference 78 (Implementation Guidelines for the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology (After Revision))

2 Discussions on Revising the So-Called "Five Categories"

Since 2022, discussions have been underway under the current National Security Strategy regarding review of the Implementation Guidelines for the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology. However, for finished products that do not fall under the categories of international joint development and production, or licensed products, transfers have been limited to the so-called Five Categories: Rescue, Transport, Warning, Surveillance, and Minesweeping. In light of the coalition agreement between the Liberal Democratic Party and the Japan Innovation Party in October 2025, as well as the March 2026 proposal entitled "Proposal on Review of the Implementation Guidelines for the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology (the Abolition of the So-Called Five Categories)," the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and their Implementation Guidelines were revised.

As a result of this revision, all finished products, parts, technologies, and services such as repair may now, in principle under the system, be transferred overseas.

Countries in Europe, North America, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere expressed their welcome and expectations regarding the revision, viewing it as a measure that will enhance regional deterrence, contribute further to regional peace and stability, and expand the possibilities for new defense equipment and technology cooperation between Japan and other countries.

3 Implementation Guidelines for the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology (After Revision)

The Implementation Guidelines for the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology primarily set forth detailed implementation rules, including the types of transfers that may be permitted, procedures for examination, and measures to ensure appropriate control.

(1) Cases in Which Transfers May Be Permitted

As set forth in the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, transfers may be permitted in cases such as when they (1) contribute to the active promotion of peace contribution and international cooperation, and (2) contribute to the security of Japan. With respect to (1), eligible cases include contributions to peace and international cooperation, such as international peace cooperation activities, international emergency relief, humanitarian assistance, responses to international terrorism and piracy, and capacity-building assistance for developing countries.

With respect to (2), transfers are limited to cases that have positive significance from the perspective of Japan's security,

2 Firearms, explosives, swords, and other machines, instruments, and devices intended to directly kill or injure people or destroy property as a means of armed struggle (includes things such as escort ships, fighter planes, and tanks that are equipped with firearms and operate to directly kill or injure people or destroy property as a means of armed struggle, and excludes parts.).

including the following cases.

○ Overseas transfers that contribute to strengthening security and defense cooperation with the United States and other countries that maintain security cooperation relationships with Japan
  - Overseas transfers of defense equipment consisting of finished products that do not fall under the category of "weapons" under the Self-Defense Forces Law
  - Overseas transfers of defense equipment consisting of finished products that fall under the category of "weapons" under the Self-Defense Forces Law (except where the transfer involves defense equipment developed or produced through international joint development and production and transferred to a partner country, or defense equipment produced under license and provided at the request of the licensor country, including onward provision by the licensor country, such transfers are limited to cases in which Japan and the recipient country have concluded an international agreement[3] requiring that the defense equipment transferred from Japan be used in a manner consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter)
  - Overseas transfers of defense equipment consisting of parts
  - Provision of services such as repairs
  - Overseas transfers of defense equipment included in the provision of goods or services carried out by the JSDF pursuant to law

○ Temporary exports of equipment necessary for the activities of the JSDF or for ens uring the safety of Japanese nationals

In addition to cases falling under (1) and (2), examples of other permissible cases include the following:

○ Overseas transfers of defense equipment (excluding weapons under the Self-Defense Forces Law and related technical information) to countries that are subject to aggression, the use of force, or threats of force in violation of international law

○ Transfers deemed to have an extremely limited impact on Japan's security, such as the export of sample items on the condition that they be returned, or the provision of technical information during the coordination stage with foreign governments or foreign companies

(2) Procedures for Examination and Related Matters

In considering a transfer, whether the transfer may be permitted is subject to strict examination based on a comprehensive consideration of two perspectives: (1) the appropriateness of the destination and end user, and (2) the extent of concern that the transfer may pose to Japan's security.

With regard to (1), the appropriateness of the destination is considered in light of factors such as whether the transfer has positive significance from the perspectives of peace contributions and international cooperation or Japan's security, taking into account the impact that the destination has on international peace and security as well as Japan's security. In addition, attention is given to the appropriateness of the end user, which takes into account factors such as the end user's track record in the use of defense equipment and the reliability of measures for ensuring appropriate control. In particular, with respect to items classified as weapons under the Self-Defense Forces Law, careful consideration is given to factors such as whether actual combat is taking place in the destination country as part of an armed conflict.

With regard to (2), consideration is given to factors such as the nature of the defense equipment and technology to be transferred, the sensitivity of the technology involved, its intended use (purpose), the quantity, and the form of the transfer.

Furthermore, with regard to the transfer of weapons under the Self-Defense Forces Law, the April 2026 revision specified examination criteria, including the security environment of the destination country or region, the export control regime of the destination country or region, and the impact on Japan's security environment, including the effects on Japan's defense buildup and the operation of the JSDF.

(3) Ensuring Appropriate Control regarding Extra-Purpose Use or Transfer to Third-Party Countries

For transfers, Japan generally requires the recipient government to obtain the prior consent of the Government of Japan for any extra-purpose use and for any transfer to a third country. In addition, mechanisms are in place under which, in certain cases, appropriate control may be ensured through confirmation of the destination's control system.

3 The "international agreement requiring that the defense equipment transferred from Japan be used in a manner consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter" here refers to so-called Agreements concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology.

Commentary

Partial Review of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and Its Implementation Guidelines

In the 2022 National Security Strategy, the transfer of defense equipment and technology is identified as a key policy instrument to create a desirable security environment for Japan. Based on this recognition, the Government of Japan has reviewed the framework to enable the transfer of a broader range of equipment, including revising the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and its Implementation Guidelines in December 2023 (the Implementation Guidelines were further revised in March 2024) and enabling the unrestricted transfer of parts.

Conversely, the transfer of finished products was limited to the so-called "Five Categories" (rescue, transport, warning, surveillance, and minesweeping). Although discussions were held since 2022 on reviewing this restriction, it remained an unresolved issue with no conclusion reached.

Amid accelerating changes in the security environment surrounding Japan, like-minded countries and partners have placed strong expectations on its high-performance equipment. However, if Japan is unable to transfer such equipment, mutual support cannot be provided in the event of an emergency. Retaining the Five Categories restriction presented other issues as well. For example, due to the difficulty of determining whether a product fell under one of the categories, Japan could not respond to the needs of partner countries in a timely and appropriate manner. In particular, with the recent combination of conventional arms and new domains, such as AI, cyber, and space, which has led to rapid changes in defense equipment and ways of warfare, categorizing equipment has become more challenging than ever before. Against this backdrop, taking into account the coalition agreement between the Liberal Democratic Party and the Japan Innovation Party of October 2025, as well as the recommendations submitted by the ruling parties in March 2026, the Government of Japan revised the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and its Implementation Guidelines in April 2026.

As a result of these revisions, Japan will be able to transfer all defense equipment in principle. The transfers can enhance the deterrence and response capabilities of Japan's ally and like-minded countries. In addition, possessing the same equipment as our ally and like-minded countries and sharing production, maintenance, and sustainment infrastructure contribute to an enabling environment for the provision of mutual support. The revisions are also highly significant for Japan in ensuring the domestic production capacity to support sustained operational capability.

Needless to say, distributing defense equipment has a significant impact on the international community, and therefore, Japan must manage equipment transfers responsibly. For this reason, the latest revisions specify that arms under the Self-Defense Forces Law may be transferred only to countries that have concluded an "international agreement* obligating the use of defense equipment transferred from Japan in a manner consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations," and that such arms shall, in principle, not be transferred to "countries where combat is currently deemed to be taking place as part of an armed conflict."

Furthermore, the revisions set forth that transfers of arms under the Self-Defense Forces Law will be subject to stricter examinations under expanded examination criteria, and that when the Government determines that a transfer may be permitted and announces it, it will notify the Diet, and ensure appropriate control of transferred arms by strengthening the monitoring system, among other measures.

Based on the above rigorous procedures, the Ministry of Defense will promote defense equipment transfers in an increasingly strategic manner in coordination with relevant ministries, agencies, and companies.



REFERENCE: Guides and other materials disseminated overseas by ATLA to promote defense equipment and technology cooperation

URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/atla/soubiseisakugijutu.html

Section 2 Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation and Related Initiatives with the United States

1 Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation Initiatives

In order to ensure the Alliance's technological edge, interoperability, readiness, and sustained operational capability, Japan will further reinforce defense equipment and technology cooperation through joint analysis and joint research in cutting-edge technology, joint 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. Japan proactively promotes cooperation in defense equipment and technology with the United States based on the mutual cooperation principle under the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement between Japan and the United States of America, while bearing in mind the maintenance of the technological and industrial bases.

In view of the progress in the technology cooperation system between Japan and the United States and improvements in technological capability levels, Japan signed the Exchange of Notes concerning the Transfer of Arms and Military Technologies to the United States of America, among other measures. Under such frameworks, Japan has decided to provide the United States with arms and military technologies, including military technologies related to joint technological research on ballistic missile defense (BMD). In addition, Japan concluded a Reciprocal Defense Procurement Arrangement[1] with the United States in 2016, and the defense ministers of the two countries later signed a Reciprocal Defense Procurement Memorandum of Understanding (RDP MOU)[2] at the Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting. The MOU promotes measures based on reciprocity (providing information necessary to tender bids for businesses of the other country, protecting submitted corporate information, waiving restrictions on participation by businesses of the other country, etc.) concerning the procurement of equipment by Japanese and U.S. defense authorities. The expiration of the Arrangement and the MOU was extended in 2021.

At the Japan-U.S. "2+2" Meeting in 2022, Japan and the United States concluded the framework Exchange of Notes on Cooperative Research, Development, Production and Sustainment as well as Cooperation in Testing and Evaluation. Based on this Exchange of Notes, Japan will advance cooperation with the United States on emerging technologies. In 2023, the Defense Science and Technology Cooperation Group (DSTCG) was newly established to focus on discussion about technology policy between the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) and the U.S. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (OUSD (R&E)).

In addition, at the Japan-U.S. "2+2" and the Japan-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting that same year, the Ministers signed a framework for (1) accelerating joint research and development[3] and (2) strengthening supply chain cooperation,[4] and also (3) confirmed substantial progress in the framework for streamlining foreign military sales (FMS).

At the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting held in April 2024, it was announced that the Forum on Defense Industrial Cooperation, Acquisition and Sustainment (DICAS) would be launched. This forum builds on and reorganizes the Japan-U.S. Systems and Technology Forum (S&TF), under which discussions had previously been held on matters such as joint research and development projects. The DICAS Forum was convened in June, October, and December 2024 as well as April 2026.

In addition, in September 2024, the Japanese Ministry of Defense (MOD)'s ATLA and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)'s Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) concluded the Memorandum for Defense Innovation Cooperation. Based on this memorandum, ATLA promotes the integration of cutting-edge civilian technologies into defense systems more rapidly and efficiently, as well as reinforcement of Japan's defense production and technological bases.

1 Exchange of Notes between Japan and the United States of America concerning Reciprocal Defense Procurement
2 Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Defense of the United States of America and the Ministry of Defense of Japan concerning Reciprocal Defense Procurement
3 Memorandum of Understanding for Research, Development, Test and Evaluation Projects between the Ministry of Defense of Japan and the Department of Defense of the United States of America
4 Security of Supply Arrangement between the Ministry of Defense of Japan and the Department of Defense of the United States of America

2 Joint Research and Development of Equipment and Related Initiatives

Since 1992, Japan has implemented 29 cooperative research projects and two cooperative development projects with the United States. At present, Japan and the United States are implementing five cooperative research projects: (1) Modular Hybrid Electric Vehicle System, (2) Overwhelming Response through Collaborative Autonomy, (3) High-Power Microwave (HPM) systems, (4) Unmanned Underwater Vehicle Resilience (Underwater Obstacle Avoidance), and (5) Safety Assurance Technology for AI-Equipped Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. The two countries are also conducting mutual dispatch of scientist and engineer personnel.

In addition, in order to address the challenge of intercepting hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs) during the glide phase by leveraging the technologies of both countries together, Japan and the United States decided in August 2023 to commence the cooperative development of the Glide Phase Interceptor (GPI).

Furthermore, in June 2025, the Japan MOD and U.S. Department of War signed the Project Arrangement concerning Japan-U.S. Cooperative Research on Unmanned Underwater Vehicle Resilience (Underwater Obstacle Avoidance). This research aims to enhance the situational awareness and response capabilities required to detect and avoid navigational hazards for unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) in complex real-ocean environments, in order to support increasingly long-duration missions required in underwater warfare.

Moreover, in September 2025, the Japan MOD and U.S. DoW signed the Project Arrangement concerning Cooperative Research on The Strategic Advancement of Mutual Runtime Assurance Artificial Intelligence (Safety Assurance Technology for AI-equipped Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)). This research seeks to ensure the safety of AI-equipped UAVs through cooperative joint research on Runtime Assurance (RTA)[5] technology. The outcomes obtained through this research are expected to be applied to UAVs and other systems that operate in collaboration with next-generation fighter aircraft.

In addition to this, the National Security Council has confirmed that the transfer of Patriot missiles to the United States in 2023 falls under the category of projects for which overseas transfers may be authorized. This transfer is an unprecedented initiative by Japan in response to a request from the United States, to replenish the U.S. military's inventory of Patriot missiles as quickly as possible and support the readiness of the U.S. military, since demand for Patriot missiles at a level exceeding expectations has been experienced by the U.S. military and by global supply chains. This will take security and defense cooperation with the United States to a new level and contribute to the security of our country and the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

See Section 3-4 (Joint Development of Next-Generation Fighter Aircraft); Part III, Chapter 1, Section 2-3 (Strengthening of Unmanned Defense Capabilities); Reference 79 (Japan-U.S. Joint Research and Development Projects)

3 Forum on Defense Industrial Cooperation, Acquisition and Sustainment (DICAS)

In April 2024, the United States-Japan Joint Leaders' Statement "Global Partners for the Future" stated that a DICAS Forum co-led by the U.S. DoD and Japan's MOD would be convened in coordination with relevant ministries to leverage our respective industrial bases to meet the demand for critical capabilities and maintain readiness over the long term.

Based on this, at the 1st DICAS held in June the same year, Japan and the United States agreed to establish working groups for further discussions on identifying opportunities for missile co-production, co-sustainment of forward-deployed U.S. Navy ships and U.S. Air Force aircraft, and supply chain resiliency for priority defense requirements, in partnership with U.S. and Japanese industry. At the Japan-U.S. "2+2" meeting held in July the same year, it was confirmed that Japan and the U.S. would pursue mutually beneficial co-production opportunities to expand the production capacity of Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM) and PAC-3 MSE. At the 2nd DICAS held in October the same year and the 3rd DICAS held in December the same year, Japan and the U.S. confirmed the progress in each of the four working groups (the Missile Co-production Working Group, the Aircraft Repair Working Group, the Supply Chain Resilience Working Group, and the Ship Repair Working Group).

At the 4th DICAS held in April 2026, the participants agreed to refer to the DICAS initiative as "DICAS 2.0," in light of the fact that DICAS efforts had entered the implementation phase. The participants also confirmed the progress of discussions within the working groups and concurred on

5 A method of ensuring the safety of UAVs by equipping them with a self-monitoring capability. If AI control compromises the UAV's safety, the system promptly switches control to a pre-verified control program that ensures safety and reliability.

further advancing cooperation in areas such as the co-production of missiles, including the AMRAAM, PAC-3 MSE, and Standard Missile (SM) -3 Block IIA; the co-sustainment of U.S. military vessels and aircraft; and the strengthening of supply chain resilience, including for critical goods and materials.

Co-production of missiles has become an important initiative not only from the perspective of strengthening Japan-U.S. defense industrial cooperation and reinforcing Japan's domestic production base, but also in terms of enhancing deterrence and response capabilities. In particular, as securing a sufficient and stable supply of missiles becomes critically important, the significance of missile co-production continues to increase.

Moreover, enabling U.S. military vessels and aircraft deployed in the vicinity of Japan to undergo sustainment within Japan, without returning to the continental United States, is an important initiative which is significant for contributing not only to reinforcing Japan's defense production and technological bases, but also to enhancing the readiness of U.S. forces through shorter and more efficient repair periods, thereby improving the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance as a whole.

4 Partnership for Indo-Pacific Industrial Resilience (PIPIR)

In the National Defense Industry Strategy (NDIS) released in January 2024, the U.S. DoD announced that it would pursue co-development, co-production, and co-sustainment with allies and like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific region in order to advance defense industrial cooperation. Based on this, Partnership for Indo-Pacific Industrial Resilience (PIPIR) was established to facilitate concrete discussions on issues related to promoting defense industrial resilience in the Indo-Pacific Region. In addition to the United States, a total of 16 countries, including Australia and the Republic of Korea, participate in this framework. The first National Armaments Director (NAD)-level meeting was held in Hawaii in October 2024, and the second vice-ministerial-level meeting was held online in March 2026.

5 Japan-U.S.-Australia Trilateral Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation Projects (RDT&E) Arrangement

At the Japan-U.S.-Australia Defense Ministerial Meeting held in May 2024, the trilateral RDT&E Arrangement was signed. Based on this arrangement, in March 2026, the project arrangement concerning the Japan-U.S.-Australia Cooperative Research Pertaining to Virtual Structural Testing for Composite Aircraft (Damage-Propagation Analysis Technologies for Composite Materials) was signed. In addition, cooperation relating to unmanned systems is also being advanced.

See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-1 (3) (Cooperative Relationship, etc., among Japan, Australia, and the United States)

6 Participation of Japanese Industry in the Production of the F-35 Fighter Aircraft and the Establishment of Regional Maintenance, Repair, Overhaul and Upgrade (MRO&U) Capability

Japan has been working to enable the involvement of Japanese industries in the manufacturing process in preparation for the acquisition of F-35A fighter aircraft. So far, Japanese companies have participated in Final Assembly and Check Out (FACO) for the airframe and engines, as well as the manufacture of related parts.

In addition, as F-35 fighter aircraft are operated worldwide, the U.S. Government decided to establish maintenance depots (regional MRO&U Capability) mainly for airframes and engines in the North America, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific regions.

The regional MRO&U depot in the Asia-Pacific region for Japan's F-35 fighter airframes selected by the U.S. Government (Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' Komaki South Plant in Aichi Prefecture) began operations in 2020. Moreover, the regional MRO&U depot for engines (IHI Mizuho Aero-Engine Works in Tokyo) began operations in 2023.

The participation in the production of F-35 fighters by Japanese industries continuously, the establishment of maintenance depots for airframes, engines and others within Japan, and the contribution to maintenance in the Asia-Pacific region not only maintain, cultivate, and advance Japan's defense production and technological bases, but are also significant from the perspectives of securing the operational support system for F-35 fighter aircraft in Japan, strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and deepening defense equipment and technology cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

7 Initiatives Toward the Establishment of the Common Maintenance Base for Ospreys of Japan and the U.S.

With regard to the U.S. Marine Corps MV-22 (Osprey) aircraft deployed at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, the Planned Maintenance Interval (PMI) by Subaru Corporation at the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF)'s Camp Kisarazu commenced in 2017. As of the end of March 2026, maintenance on 10 aircraft had been completed, while two aircraft were undergoing maintenance.

The MOD intends to establish a common maintenance base for both Japan's and the United States' Ospreys by allowing the maintenance company to use the hangar at GSDF Camp Kisarazu for aircraft maintenance of the U.S. Marine Corps Ospreys and to carry out future aircraft maintenance of the GSDF Ospreys (V-22) at the same camp in view of the (1) smooth introduction of the V-22 (GSDF Ospreys);[6] (2) smooth and effective operation of the Japan-U.S. security arrangements; and (3) enhanced efficiency in maintenance. The establishment of a common maintenance base at GSDF Camp Kisarazu would be extremely significant in that it would contribute to mitigating the impact on Okinawa as well as to the "strengthening of the infrastructure for the repair and maintenance of common equipment" stated in the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation (the Guidelines).

6 The GSDF introduced 17 Ospreys, which were provisionally deployed at Camp Kisarazu until August 2025 as a temporary measure until the completion of facility development at Saga Airport.

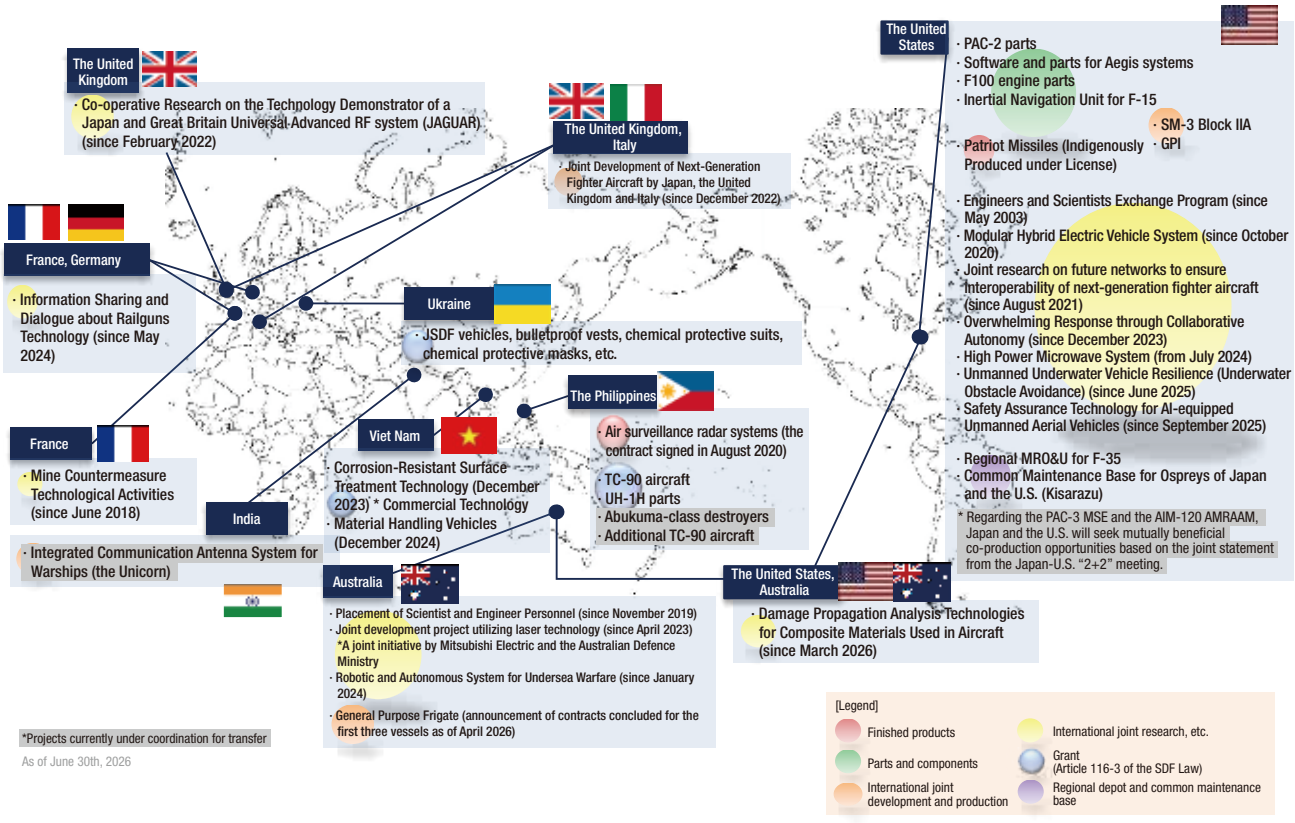
Section 3 Building New Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation

1 Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation with Other Countries, etc.

Considering that cooperation in defense equipment is an initiative that spans more than half a century from its conception to decomissioning, Japan is strengthening initiatives for defense equipment and technology cooperation, 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.[1] In particular, Japan has decided to effectively promote these initiatives by combining them with other efforts, such as high-level practitioner exchanges, multilateral training and exercises, and capacity building, and other non-MOD measures, such as Official Security Assistance (OSA). In this regard, Japan will consider transferring equipment that has reached a considerable number of years in service and has limited expandability to like-minded countries through early decommissioning or early removal from service.

See Fig. IV-3-3-1 (Main Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation with Other Countries (image)); Part III, Chapter 1, Section 3-4 (International Cooperation to Enhance the Deterrence Capabilities of Japan and Its Like-minded Countries and Others); Reference 41 (Situations Concerning the Conclusion of Agreements)

Fig. IV-3-3-1 Main Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation with Other Countries (image)



1 As of April 2026, Japan has signed the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology with the following countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, India, the Philippines, France, Germany, Malaysia, Italy, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Thailand, Sweden, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Mongolia, and Bangladesh.

1 Australia

With Australia, the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology[2] went into effect in 2014, and the Japan-Australia Joint Steering Committee for Defence Equipment and Technology Cooperation was first held in 2017. Since then, Japan and Australia have held regular consultations to advance Japan-Australia defense equipment and technology cooperation, and signed various arrangements, conducted mutual exchanges of scientists and engineers, and implemented a variety of joint research. In 2023, as the first joint development project between Japan and Australia, a contract was concluded between the Australian Department of Defence and Mitsubishi Electric Australia for a joint development project utilizing laser technology (the Boobook project). In the same year, the Japan-Australia Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) Projects Arrangement was signed, and based on this arrangement, the Japan-Australia Joint Research on a Robotic and Autonomous System for Undersea Warfare commenced in 2024.

In addition, in August 2025, Australia selected the FY2024 Upgraded Japanese Mogami class frigate as its general-purpose frigate. This selection reflects the high level of trust and recognition placed in defense equipment incorporating Japan's outstanding technologies. The project carries broad significance, including substantially enhancing interoperability between Japan and Australia, strengthening shipbuilding and sustainment capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region, and reinforcing Japan-Australia supply chain cooperation, thereby contributing to peace and stability in the region. Going

Commentary

Transfer of the Upgraded Mogami class Frigate to Australia

In August 2025, the Upgraded Mogami class frigate was selected as the general purpose frigate for the Royal Australian Navy. In addition, it was announced the finalization of contracts for the first three Australia's general purpose frigates based on the Upgraded Mogami class frigate in April 2026. Going forward, Japan and Australia will jointly develop and produce a total of 11 frigates based on Upgraded Mogami class frigate, which will be transferred to Australia. The operation of this vessel by the Royal Australian Navy is expected to significantly enhance interoperability and interchangeability between Japan and Australia. The Upgraded Mogami class frigate also has a high level of interoperability with the U.S. Navy and possesses capabilities that will contribute to strengthening Japan-U.S.-Australia cooperation. In addition, this project is expected to enhance shipbuilding and sustainment capabilities in the Indo-Pacific Region and reinforce Japan-Australia supply chain cooperation. Therefore, the selection by the Government of Australia not only deepens Japan-Australia cooperation, but also has extremely significant implications for Japan's security and, by extension, contributes to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and the international community.

In preparation for this selection by the Government of Australia, Japan had worked on the project through joint public and private efforts. These efforts included the establishment of the "Government-Industry Joint Committee for the Promotion for Australia's Next General Purpose Frigate" in December 2024 by relevant ministries, agencies, and companies, as well as a visit to Canberra in July 2025 by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Chairman Izumisawa and former Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency Commissioner Ishikawa, during which they engaged with government officials and others.

As the Upgraded Mogami class frigate can be operated for more than 40 years, long-term cooperation between the governments and companies of both Japan and Australia will be indispensable throughout the entire project, from contract to disposal. We will continue to work through joint public and private efforts to steadily advance this project.



Mogami class frigate

2 Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of Australia concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology

forward, Japan and Australia will jointly develop and produce a total of 11 frigates. In April 2026, Defense Minister Koizumi and Australian Deputy Prime Minister Marles announced the finalisation of contracts for Australia's first three general purpose frigates based on the Upgraded Mogami class frigate. They also signed the Memorandum of Cooperation Concerning Australia's General Purpose Frigates Between the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence of Australia and the Defense Minister of Japan ('Mogami Memorandum').

See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-1 (Australia)

2 India

Japan considers defense equipment and technology cooperation with India as an important field of cooperation based on the Special Strategic Global Partnership between Japan and India. At the Japan-India summit meeting in 2015, both countries signed the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology,[3] which entered into force in 2016. They have held regular meetings since then.

In November 2024, based on the Japan-India Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology, the Memorandum of Implementation (MOI) concerning the transfer of the Unified Complex Radio Antenna (UNICORN) installed on the Mogami-class frigate from Japan to India was signed between Japan and India. Coordination toward the realization of the transfer is ongoing.

In addition, Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between Japan and India, revised in August 2025, confirmed that the two countries would cooperate in the fields of defense equipment, emerging technologies, and economic security.

See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-2 (India)



UNICORN scheduled for transfer to India

3 The United Kingdom

With the United Kingdom, the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology[4] was signed and went into effect in 2013, and Japan and the United Kingdom have held regular meetings since then. Since 2022, Japan and the United Kingdom together with Italy, have been jointly developing fighter aircraft under the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP). They also conduct joint research involving technology demonstrations for next-generation RF sensor systems.

See 4 (Joint Development of Next-Generation Fighter Aircraft); Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-3 (1) (the United Kingdom)

4 France and Germany

Japan's Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology[5, 6] entered into force with France in 2016, and with Germany in 2017. In May 2024, the MOD, the French Ministry for the Armed Forces, the Federal Ministry of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany, and the French-German Research Institute of Saint-Louis signed the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Cooperation on Railgun Technologies, and are now working toward the early practical application of railguns.

See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-3 (2) (France); Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-3 (3) (Germany)

5 Italy

With Italy, the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology[7] went into effect in 2019. In addition, the two countries, together with the United Kingdom, have been engaged in the joint development of fighter aircraft in GCAP since 2022.

See 4 (Joint Development of Next-Generation Fighter Aircraft); Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-3 (4) (Italy)

6 Ukraine

In response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2022 and based on the request of the Ukrainian Government to provide equipment, etc., the MOD partially revised the

3 Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of India concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology
4 Agreement Between the Government of Japan and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Concerning the Transfer of Arms and Military Technologies Necessary to Implement Joint Research, Development and Production of Defence Equipment and Other Related Items
5 Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of France concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology
6 Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology
7 Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Italian Republic concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology

Implementation Guidelines for the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology at the meeting of the National Security Council in 2022, in order to provide non-lethal supplies within the scope of the Three Principles in accordance with the Self-Defense Forces Law. To date, it has provided the Ukrainian Government with bulletproof vests, helmets, winter battle dress uniforms, tents, cameras, hygiene products and medical supplies, emergency rations, binoculars, lighting devices, personal equipment, chemical protective masks, chemical protective suits, small drones, civilian vehicles (vans), and JSDF vehicles (1/2t trucks, high mobility vehicles, and material handling vehicles) via JSDF aircraft and other means. Furthermore, in the Japan-Ukraine Defense Ministerial Meeting held in October 2024, Defense Minister NAKATANI Gen informed Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov that Japan had decided to provide additional JSDF vehicles to Ukraine. The transfer of a total of 131 vehicles, together with medical supplies such as medical gloves and surgical masks, had been completed in January 2026.

See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-7 (1) (Ukraine); Reference 77 (Implementation Guidelines for the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology (Before Revision))



JSDF vehicles provided to Ukraine

7 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Countries

Japan and ASEAN countries have exchanged views regarding defense equipment and technology cooperation in nontraditional security sectors, such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR), and maritime security, through the Japan-ASEAN Defense Vice-Ministerial Meetings and other occasions. Participating countries have expressed their expectation for Japan's cooperation in effectively dealing with these issues. In the "Vientiane Vision" announced by Japan in 2016, it was stated that Japan's defense equipment and technology cooperation with ASEAN countries would be promoted with a focus on the following three points: (1) equipment and technology transfer, (2) human resources development, and (3) holding seminars on defense industries.

(1) The Philippines

With the Philippines, after the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology[8] went into effect in 2016, the loan and granting of five TC-90 training aircraft of the MSDF was realized. Moreover, the granting of parts and maintenance equipment of GSDF UH-1H utility helicopters and the transfer of four air surveillance radar systems as the first case of an overseas transfer of finished equipment were decided, with deliveries currently being made sequentially. Furthermore, along with this transfer project, educational support on operation and maintenance for personnel of the Philippine Air Force is provided by the JSDF and Japanese companies.

In September 2024, the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) exhibited a booth for the first time at Asian Defense and Security Exhibition (ADAS) 2024 held in the Philippines and communicated the appeal of Japan's equipment to the Government and companies of the Philippines as well as others, while also confirming continued cooperation toward strengthening defense equipment and technology cooperation. At the four Japan-Philippines Defense Ministerial Meetings held in 2025, the two sides also concurred on continuing to advance defense equipment and technology cooperation.

(2) Viet Nam

With Viet Nam, following the signing of the Terms of Reference (TOR) for Regular Consultations Concerning Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation in 2016 and the signing of the Memorandum between Japan and Viet Nam Defense Authorities on the Orientation of Promotion of Defense Industry Cooperation in 2019, the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology[9] was signed by both countries and went into effect in 2021. In addition to the transfer of anti-corrosion pre-treatment processing technology in 2023, the transfer of two decommissioned material handling vehicles was realized, in December 2024, as the first defense equipment transfer since the signing of the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, and a commemorative ceremony was hosted by the Ministry of National Defence of Viet Nam. Furthermore, in conjunction with this transfer,

8 Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology

9 Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology

educational support for operation and repairs was provided by the GSDF and Japanese companies to personnel of the Vietnamese military.

At the first Japan-Viet Nam Foreign and Defense Vice-Ministerial Level Meeting (Vice-Ministerial Meeting "2+2") held in December 2025, the two sides confirmed that they would further concretize cooperation in the field of security, and discussed defense equipment and technology cooperation.

See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-8 (Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN))

8 United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology[10] was signed between Japan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2023, which is the first time for Japan to sign this type of agreement with a country in the Middle East region. The Agreement entered into force in January 2024.

See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-11 (6) (United Arab Emirates (UAE))

9 Mongolia

With Mongolia, the Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of Mongolia concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology[11] was signed in December 2024 and went into effect in January 2025.

See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-8 (12) (Mongolia)

10 AUKUS (Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States)

In September 2024, in the AUKUS Joint Leaders Statement and the AUKUS Defence Ministers' Joint Statement, the "maritime autonomous systems" in AUKUS Pillar II were cited as an initial area for exploring opportunities for Pillar II cooperation with Japan.

As a part of exploring opportunities for this cooperation, ATLA experts and others were dispatched from Japan to Autonomous Warrior 24, a multilateral experiment and exercise concerning maritime autonomous systems and other systems held in October the same year and hosted by Australia. Furthermore, during the multilateral joint exercise Talisman Sabre 25 held in July 2025, Japan's MOD/JSDF participated in an experimental exercise on underwater acoustic communications for maritime autonomous systems and evaluated the interoperability of such systems.

Cooperation with the three countries - Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States concerning AUKUS Pillar II supports collaboration among allies and like-minded countries in terms of advanced technologies, and reinforces the shared capabilities of Japan and the three countries, greatly contributing to enhancing deterrence and response capabilities in the region. Accordingly, Japan has decided to continue advancing consultations in order to realize this cooperation.

See Part I, Chapter 3, Section6-1-2 (2) (AUKUS Initiatives)

2 Provision of Defense Equipment to Developing Countries

Surrounded by an increasingly severe security environment, it has become even more important for Japan that the nations which have a cooperative and friendly relationship with Japan in terms of security and defense have appropriate capabilities. It is also critical to develop a foundation that will serve as the basis for the international community to cooperate toward improving the security environment.

Among these friendly nations, some have difficulties in acquiring an adequate level of defense equipment on their own because of the scale of their economy and fiscal situation. Some of these states have been requesting to use JSDF equipment that is no longer in use.

Under these circumstances, to respond to the needs of such friendly nations, the MOD established a special provision under Article 9, paragraph (1) of the Public Finance Act[12] in the SDF Law, which came into force in 2017. The provision enables the MOD to grant or transfer JSDF equipment that is no longer in use to the governments of developing states at a lower price than the current price.

Even in the case of granting or transferring equipment at a lower price than the current price as per this provision, whether or not to transfer such equipment, and to which government such equipment is to be transferred, will be determined case-by-case in light of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and other regulations. In addition, the Government of Japan and partner countries must conclude an international agreement to prevent extra-purpose use and transfer to third-parties without the prior consent of Japan.

10 Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the United Arab Emirates concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology
11 Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of Mongolia concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology
12 Article 9, paragraph (1) of the Public Finance Act (Act No. 34 of 1947) states that governmental assets, unless otherwise provided for, may not be exchanged and used as other means of payment, or transferred or leased without reasonable consideration.

3 Other Initiatives for Defense Equipment and Technical Cooperation

In addition to establishing the Fund to Facilitate the Transfer of Defense Equipment, the MOD/JSDF is also promoting the transfer of defense equipment through the following initiatives.

1 Participation in International Defense Equipment Exhibitions

ATLA has participated in international defense equipment exhibitions to introduce Japan's defense equipment policies and advanced technology. These initiatives help foreign government officials better understand Japan's equipment policies and technology, and contribute to building bases for the promotion of defense equipment and technology cooperation.

Within Japan, at DSEI Japan 2025 held in May 2025, the ATLA booth displayed full-scale prototypes and models of systems under research and development utilizing advanced technologies, including the railgun. Booths for the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces were also set up to exhibit actual objects and models of JSDF vehicles and other equipment. Furthermore, for the first time, the MOD/JSDF displayed an actual Mogami-class frigate at a nearby port.

Overseas, ATLA exhibited booths at the international defense exhibitions DSEI UK 2025 held in the United Kingdom in September 2025, INDO PACIFIC 2025 held in Australia in November of the same year, the Singapore Airshow 2026 held in Singapore and the World Defense Show 2026 held in Saudi Arabia in February 2026, and DSA 2026 held in Malaysia in April of the same year. With close public-private cooperation, Japan widely promoted the appeal of its defense equipment and its advanced technological capabilities.

A high level of interest in Japan's outstanding technologies and advanced equipment was received from the foreign government officials, military personnel, and defense industry people who visited these ATLA/JSDF booths.



DSEI UK 2025 held in the United Kingdom



World Defense Show 2026 held in Saudi Arabia

2 Public-Private Collaboration for Appropriate Overseas Transfer of Equipment

With regard to the overseas transfer of defense equipment, the Defense Buildup Program states that the Government will take the lead in promoting the appropriate overseas transfer of defense equipment and technology under further cooperation between the public and private sectors.

In cooperation with trading companies and manufacturing companies, ATLA has conducted Feasibility Studies to grasp the potential needs of target countries and carried out activities to solicit proposals since FY2020.

The ATLA has held the Defense Industry Forum, in which defense authorities and companies from both countries meet to exchange views on the overseas transfer of defense equipment between Japan and the partner country, with Indonesia (held in 2017), India, Viet Nam, Australia, Italy, the Philippines, and others.

Additionally, the ATLA developed a portal site in 2022 designed to provide a platform for sharing information on the overseas transfer of defense equipment between the public and private sectors, which has long been requested by the defense industry. The portal site provides information on countries' procurement systems and Japan's defense equipment transfer system for defense-related companies that are working on overseas transfers.

3 Preventing Leakage of Key Technologies for Defense Equipment

In promoting defense equipment and technology cooperation

internationally, the MOD will work to strengthen defense industrial security and the management of sensitive technologies and intellectual property in order to prevent the leakage of key technologies for defense equipment.

See Chapter 2, Section 1-1-2 (4) (Protecting the Confidential of Defense Equipment); Chapter 2, Section 1-2-4 (Strengthening Defense Industrial Security); Chapter 2, Section 1-2-5 (Strengthening Management of Sensitive Technologies)

4 Joint Development of Next-Generation Fighter Aircraft

For the defense of Japan and to ensure air superiority well into the future, it is vital that Japan continues to employ superior, state-of-the-art fighters. Therefore, with regard to the next-generation fighter aircraft that would succeed the F-2 fighters scheduled to be decommissioned starting around 2035, it is imperative to realize Japan-led development which ensures freedom of modification for timely and appropriate upgrades in the future and secures indigenous defense production and technological bases for high readiness, etc., to maintain the capability to effectively counter numerically superior opponents. To develop next-generation fighter aircraft, the MOD concluded a FY2020 project contract with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd. as a prime company to be in charge of the holistic integration of the fighter aircraft, and the development began.

Japan, the United Kingdom, and Italy then conducted a joint analysis on the extent of commonality of the aircraft, and the three nations agreed to develop a common platform. In 2022, the leaders of the three nations officially announced this program as the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP).[13] The program enables the three nations to bring together technological advantages and share costs and risks for the joint development of an advanced fighter aircraft which will ensure future air superiority. This cooperation will not only encourage further industrial cooperation among the three nations but also maintain and reinforce Japan's defense production and technological bases by increasing the number of production type next-generation fighter aircraft, nurturing the next generation of engineers with international experience, and introducing advanced development and manufacturing methods such as digital engineering. To establish an efficient framework for trilateral cooperation, the countries signed the Convention on the Establishment of the GCAP International Government Organisation (GIGO). The Convention entered into force in December 2024, thus establishing GIGO. In June 2025, the joint venture Edgewing was established as the corresponding private-sector organization. In April 2026, the first international contract was concluded between GIGO and Edgewing, consolidating contracts that had previously been concluded separately between each government and companies within its country.

Furthermore, this cooperation on the next-generation fighter aircraft between the three countries, which share fundamental values and are allies of the United States, will serve as the foundation for cooperation in broader areas with the United Kingdom and Italy for generations to come and contribute significantly to peace and stability in both the Indo-Pacific region and Europe. In December 2022, the United States announced to support Japan's security and defense cooperation with like-minded allies and partners, including with the United Kingdom and Italy on the trilateral joint development of the next generation fighter aircraft.

As for collaboration between Japan and the United States, in December 2023, the Japan MOD and the U.S. Department of Defense signed a Project Arrangement for cooperative research on Overwhelming Response through Collaborative



Image of a next-generation fighter aircraft

REFERENCE: Development of Next-Generation Fighter Aircraft
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/policy/defense/nextfighter/index.html

13 Joint Statement on the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) (December 9, 2022)

Autonomy, which is expected to be applied to unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) that operate in collaboration with the next-generation fighter aircraft.

VOICE

Interview with GIGO Chief Executive OKA Masami and Edgewing CEO Marco Zoff

In April 2026, the first integrated contract was concluded between the GCAP International Government Organisation (GIGO)—an international organization established by the governments of Japan, the United Kingdom, and Italy—and the joint venture Edgewing, achieving one of the key milestones of the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP). With GCAP having reached this important juncture, we asked GIGO Chief Executive OKA Masami (Mr. Oka) and Edgewing CEO Marco Zoff (Mr. Zoff), who lead GCAP from public and private-sector positions, respectively, about the outlook for GCAP and related matters. (A written interview was conducted in April 2026.)

Q. How would you assess the way GIGO and Edgewing are functioning?

(Mr. Oka) GIGO and Edgewing are organizations that represent the public and private sectors, respectively, within GCAP. Both are located in Reading in the United Kingdom, where personnel dispatched from the public and private sectors of the three countries meet face-to-face and work together on a daily basis to advance the program. This system has only just begun, but I get the feeling every day that it has the potential to become greater than merely the sum of its parts.

(Mr. Zoff) It has been approximately one year since GIGO and Edgewing established their cooperative relationship, and the fact that we have been able to build this framework at such speed in the defense field is groundbreaking. Behind this achievement are the passion of each individual involved and the establishment of a common mindset through an entirely new approach. I believe the most important driving force is the spirit shared across GCAP as a whole of working together toward the goal of delivering unprecedented results in a short period of time.

Q. Could you briefly share your outlook for GCAP and your aspirations going forward?

(Mr. Oka) Although it is easy to state that we are developing a state-of-the-art fighter aircraft, the program is still in its early stages, and many challenges are certain to emerge going forward. However, I am confident that GIGO and Edgewing will be able to overcome them. I will continue to work closely with Marco to advance the program.

(Mr. Zoff) Our priorities going forward are to accelerate the development of GCAP and to advance Edgewing's global expansion with an eye on the future. As the foundation for this, we will continue to cultivate a seamless cooperative relationship with GIGO. Going forward, Edgewing plans to establish sites in Japan, Italy, and the United Kingdom, and these will serve as extremely important assets in enabling advanced design activities that will move GCAP forward.



Mr. Oka, Chief Executive of GCAP Agency, and Mr. Zoff, CEO of Edgewing

Chapter 4

Equipment Optimization Efforts

1 Initiatives for Building a More Efficient Equipment Structure

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.

Accordingly, the Defense Buildup Program (DBP) stipulates the suspension of use of equipment whose importance has decreased and the review of projects with low cost-effectiveness.

2 Initiatives to Make the Most of Limited Human Resources (Labor-Saving and Automation)

1 Initiatives for Automation

The DBP calls for reviewing existing equipment systems and personnel assignments in order to promote unmanned and labor-saving defense equipment. Therefore, in the underwater domain and other domains, research began in FY2024 on stealthy combat-supporting, multi-purpose unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) that selectively carry functions such as warning and surveillance and launching of anti-ship missiles to support manned naval vessels. In addition, the development of unmanned amphibious vehicles that can act autonomously in amphibious operations and perform missions, including transportation of supplies from the sea to the vicinity of troops, has begun in FY2024. And research and development on combat support Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) that will operate in collaboration with manned aircraft such as the next-generation fighter aircraft will also be advanced.

2 Initiatives for Labor-Saving

The DBP stipulates increasing the number of labor-saving frigates (FFM)[1] at an early date, as well as the continuation of research on technologies related to USVs in order to achieve further labor-saving and automation in surface vessels.

3 Project Management Throughout Equipment Life Cycle

1 Acquisition of Defense Equipment Through Focused Project Management

As defense equipment is becoming more sophisticated and complex, the cost of its entire life cycle (concept study, research and development, mass production, deployment, operation and maintenance) has tended to increase in recent years. It has become extremely important to streamline acquisition throughout the life cycle of equipment and to establish an organizational management framework to achieve this in order to efficiently and systematically acquire equipment of assured quality at an appropriate cost and by the required time. Therefore, upon selecting important equipment, the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) undertakes project management throughout the life cycle of the equipment and promotes efforts to realize optimized equipment acquisition.

Specifically, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) has selected 43 items for major programs designated for project management and 15 items for semi-major programs for project management[2] as of April 1, 2026. For major programs designated for project management, the MOD designates a Project Manager (PM) dedicated to each specific major

1 New destroyers that combine improved multi-mission capabilities with compact hulls

2 A semi-major program is an acquisition project for specific equipment to which project management is applied, without the designation of a PM or the establishment of an IPT, but with a focus on risks related to functions, performance, costs, schedules, and other factors in a manner equivalent to that for major programs designated for project management.

program, following which project management for that program is conducted by an Integrated Project Team (IPT), which is composed of officials from relevant divisions within the MOD.

For each of the 58 major and semi-major programs designated for project management as of April 1, 2026, the MOD has formulated an Acquisition Strategy and an Acquisition Plan (Designated Item Plans), which specify the basic matters necessary to systematically implement project management, such as the purpose of the acquisition program, acquisition policy, and life cycle costs.

Furthermore, in principle, ATLA annually reviews the implementation status of the Designated Item Plans and endeavors to promote appropriate project management that reflects the latest status by conducting analysis and evaluation, on the basis of which the Designated Item Plans are reviewed as necessary. In FY2025, analysis and evaluation of the acquisition programs were conducted for the 57 major and semi-major programs which had been designated for project management.

See Fig. IV-4-1 (Equipment of Major Programs and Semi-Major Programs Designated for Project Management)

Fig. IV-4-1 Equipment of Major Programs and Semi-Major Programs Designated for Project Management

	Equipment of Major Programs Designated for Project Management		Equipment for Semi-Project Management, etc.
Ground Self Defense Force	Type-03 Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (modified) Hyper Velocity Gliding Projectile for the defense of remote islands Upgraded Type-12 surface-to-ship guided missiles (ground-launched) Hypersonic missiles Hyper Velocity Gliding Projectile for the defense of remote islands (upgraded capability) Upgraded Type-03 Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (modified) Target observation rounds	New surface-to-ship and surface-to-surface precision guided missiles Unmanned amphibious vehicle Type-16 mobile combat vehicle Armored Modular Vehicle – Armored Personnel Carrier Unmanned amphibious vehicle GSDF UH-2 V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft CH-47JA	Type-19 155mm Wheeled Howitzer Self-Propelled Type-10 tank Common tactical wheeled vehicle
Maritime Self Defense Force	SM-3 Block IIA Upgraded Type-12 SSM (ship variants) Tomahawk Submarine Launched Missiles GPI New destroyer (Mogami-class) FY2017 submarine Aegis System Equipped Vessel	Controlled test UUV New FFM Combat support multipurpose USV SH-60L P-1 Electronic warfare aircraft MQ-9B SeaGuardian	Type-23 ship-to-air guided missiles Type-23 air-to-ship guided missiles New ship-to-air missile (upgraded capability) Minesweepers Patrol Vessels New replenishment ship Radar system for high-speed, highly maneuverable targets
Air Self Defense Force	Upgraded Type-12 SSM (air-launched variants) Next-generation medium-range air-to-air guided missiles Unmanned aerial vehicle RQ-4B (Global Hawk) SDA satellite system C-2 F-35A KC-46A	E-2D F-35B Stand-off electronic warfare aircraft F-15 capabilities improvement CH-47J Future Fighter Aircraft Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) operated in collaboration with the next-generation fighter aircraft	Next-generation warning and control radar devices ASM-3 (Advanced) Space Situational Awareness System RC-2
Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency	Guided missile system for combating HGVs	Future Railgun	New anti-ship missiles for the defense of remote islands

Items are as of April 1, 2026.
The upgraded Type-12 surface-to-ship guided missiles is centrally managed across its ground-launched (GSDF), ship-launched (MSDF), and air-launched (ASDF) variants.
The CH-47 helicopters are jointly managed, encompassing both the CH-47JA operated by the GSDF and the CH-47J operated by the JASDF.

2 Initiatives to Promote and Strengthen Project Management

(1) Past Initiatives

a. Cost and Schedule Management Using WBS (Work Breakdown Structure)

For certain kinds of equipment, etc. produced in Japan, the MOD promotes the introduction of a management method to visualize the progress of work and cost generated by component (WBS).[3] Since 2020, efforts have been made for the public and private sectors to jointly manage costs and schedules through the use of an incentivized risk-sharing management contract system, which allows for the early detection of cost increases and schedule delays and for action to be taken promptly.

3 WBS is a hierarchical structure used to implement project management that systematically divides the project into manageable units, for which the schedule and cost of each deliverable (component, service, etc.) are allocated.

b. Method for More Accurate Cost Estimate

Life cycle costs have been estimated based on actual cost data of similar equipment developed or introduced in the past. However, as a larger amount of cost data is needed for a more accurate estimate, the MOD promotes the establishment of a cost database by collecting cost data and accumulating it into a database.

c. Accumulation and Development of Expertise

For further improving the management skills of PMs and enhancing human resources among those who engage in project management, the MOD provides opportunities to study project management methods from overseas and the private sector on a regular basis.

(2) Future Initiatives

In order to further promote effective and efficient equipment acquisition, the MOD needs to enhance the effectiveness and flexibility of project management throughout equipment life cycles. Therefore, the DBP stipulates that further efforts for effective and efficient acquisition of equipment will include reducing costs through planned and stable acquisition of equipment by expanding the application of long-term contracts, improving the predictability of companies and promoting efficient production, conducting procurement in consideration of the supply-demand situation of equipment including that of other countries, and narrowing down the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF)'s own unique specifications that cause costs to rise.

4 Improving the Contract System and Other Related Matters

1 Long-Term Contracts, etc.

The production of defense equipment requires a significant amount of time. Therefore, if a certain amount is to be procured in bulk, a contract for more than five years is needed in many cases. With regard to defense equipment and services, economies of scale[4] tend not to work mainly due to the following reasons: (1) the MOD is often the only customer, and (2) companies that provide such defense equipment and services are limited. In addition, it is difficult for companies to systematically move forward with their businesses with a high degree of predictability, a trait that is peculiar to the defense industry.

For these reasons, although the period of expenditure for acts that incur national debt is limited to five years in principle under the Public Finance Act, this period has been extended to a maximum of ten years for specific equipment through the enactment of the Long-term Contract Act.[5] The introduction of this change regarding long-term contracts will make stable procurement possible, leading to the realization of the systematic improvement of defense buildup. At the same time, for companies, given that the procurement amount will be assured, the systematic use of personnel and equipment, as well as cost reductions due to bulk orders, will be made possible.

In addition, by implementing longer-term, multiple-year contracts utilizing the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Act,[6] the planned acquisition and execution of budgets is achieved through the equalization of national expenditure.

In addition, regarding the procurement of certain equipment for which little competitiveness can be expected due to its characteristics, and for companies that work on cost reduction by utilizing the MOD's programs, the MOD ensures transparency and fairness and promotes the appropriate use of limited tendering contracts after clarifying and categorizing the targets, with a view to implementing prompt and efficient procurement and enhancing predictability for companies.

2 Measures to Lower Procurement Costs and Incentivize Companies to Reduce Cost

With regard to the procurement of defense equipment, the cost is tending to increase because a large variety of equipment has no market price. Based on those characteristics, it is necessary to achieve both the reduction of procurement cost and improvement of companies' incentives to reduce cost simultaneously.

To achieve this, ATLA has been employing the incentivized risk-sharing management contract system to the next-generation fighter aircraft project, the stand-off electronic warfare aircraft project, and other projects. In addition, as a



REFERENCE: Project management
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/atla/soubiseisaku_project.html

4 "Economies of scale" refer to the cost advantage that arises from an increased output of a product. For example, the cost per unit can be reduced with the bulk purchase of materials.
5 "Special Measures Law Concerning the Term of Expenditure Based on the Obligatory Assurance of National Subsidization for Specific Defense Procurement" (enacted in April 2015. Made permanent by an amendment in March 2024.)
6 Act on Promotion of Private Finance Initiative

mechanism for evaluating companies' own cost reduction efforts, a system has been established to provide incentive payments based on the results of cost reduction initiatives. The expansion of its application and other approaches to encouraging such efforts are constantly being considered.

5 Initiatives Aimed at Increasing the Efficiency of Procurement and Other Related Initiatives

1 Effective and Efficient Maintenance and Replenishment

With regard to periodic maintenance of equipment, the MOD/JSDF has been working to improve efficiency by extending the maintenance intervals, after sufficiently confirming safety. Moreover, the MOD/JSDF is working to expand comprehensive contracts such as Performance Based Logistics (PBL)[7] with a view to increasing the number of operationally available equipment and keeping long-term costs under control.

2 Achieving Further Efficiency in the Acquisition of Defense Equipment

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 cutting-edge civilian technologies, the MOD/JSDF will steadily realize early deployment of defense equipment 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.

See Chapter 2, Section2-3-4 (New Measures for Early Deployment); Part II, Chapter 2, Section 4-3 (Optimization Efforts)

3 Efforts to Increase Fairness and Transparency

The MOD implements measures for making contracts more appropriate and strengthening checking functions to promote the enhancement of fairness and transparency in relation to the acquisition of equipment and materials.

Based on its efforts to achieve more appropriate public procurement across the whole government, the MOD continues to utilize a comprehensive evaluation bidding system[8] and make bidding procedures more efficient. In addition to these, based on the lessons learned from past incidents involving the procurement of equipment and other items, such as overcharging and falsification of the results of equipment testing, measures such as strengthening system investigation, raising the penalty rate, and ensuring the effectiveness of supervision and inspection have been steadily implemented. Also, in response to the issues identified by the special defense inspection on submarine repair contracts implemented from 2024 to 2025, the MOD carried out revisions including further enhancing the effectiveness of cost investigations and system investigations and expanding the scope of the obligation to present authentic materials concerning the contracts. Through these efforts, the MOD is working to prevent the recurrence of misconduct, enhance fairness and transparency in procurement, and ensure proper contracts.

In addition, ATLA is further enhancing internal inspections by the Inspection and Audit Department while carrying out multilayered checks on the contracts it administers through both internal and external checking systems and checks and balances within the organization. These include defense inspections conducted by the Inspector General's Office of Legal Compliance and deliberations by the Defense Procurement Council, which is composed of external experts. Moreover, ATLA has also improved its education department and strives to enhance compliance awareness by providing thorough education pertaining to compliance for ATLA personnel.

7 PBL contracts are concluded under long-term public-private partnerships for a comprehensive scope of work, with emphasis placed on outcomes achieved through the provision of services and other support.

8 Unlike the automatic bid system, which focuses only on price, this is a system in which the successful bidder is determined on the basis of a comprehensive evaluation of both the price and other elements. This method is adopted when it is appropriate to evaluate technological elements, etc.

6 Advancing Initiatives Aimed at Effectiveness of Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Procurement

1 Streamlining Initiatives

FMS is a form of U.S. security assistance authorized by the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), etc. that enables U.S. allies and partners to purchase defense equipment and services from the U.S. Government. The characteristics of FMS include: (1) prices are estimates; (2) payments are made in advance in principle and settled after delivery; and (3) delivery dates are estimates. FMS is critical to reinforcing the defense capabilities of Japan.

Meanwhile, there are various FMS-related issues, such as late delivery and late case closure. As the FMS procurement amount has been hovering at a high level in recent years, the Governments of Japan and the United States have been actively working together to improve the situation.

Specifically, ATLA and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) have held the Security Cooperation Consultative Meeting (SCCM) to discuss the issues over FMS procurement 10 times since 2016.

At the 10th SCCM held in January 2026, Japan and the United States agreed to continue strengthening case management between them in terms of late delivery and late case closures in view of the increase of FMS procurement going forward, and to advance efforts aimed at reducing the value of late deliveries and late case closures. In addition, Japan continued to request the provision of more detailed pricing information in order to ensure price transparency.

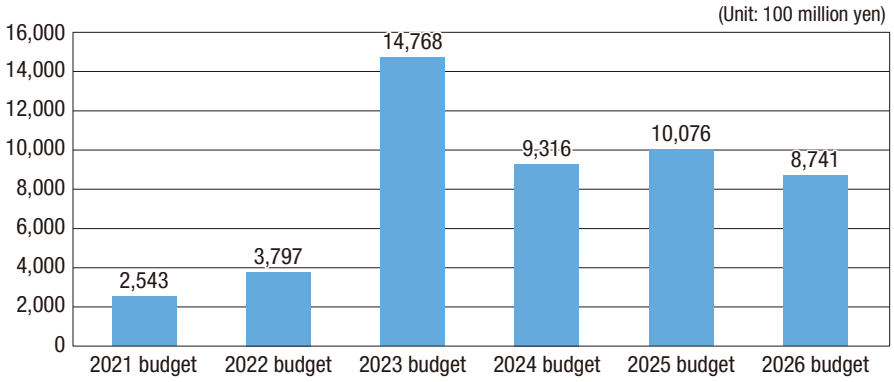
In addition, in 2023, ATLA and the U.S. Department of Defense concluded a framework to confirm reciprocal and free-of-charge quality assurance services for equipment, etc. This framework exempts quality assurance fees for FMS procurement, which reduces FMS procurement costs and strengthens collaborative relations within the Japan-U.S. Alliance in procurement, thereby advancing the effectiveness of FMS procurement.

2 Other Initiatives

With regard to imported procured equipment, including equipment procured through foreign military sales (FMS), Japan intends to pursue the sustainment and maintenance of imported equipment by Japanese companies and further promote international joint research and development of high-capability equipment with the United States and other countries. As part of these efforts, an exhibition (Industry Day) is held to create matching opportunities with the U.S. Forces and the U.S. defense industry in order to encourage Japanese companies to participate in the equipment supply chains common to both Japan and the United States as well as in the sustainment and maintenance programs of the U.S. Forces in the Indo-Pacific region. In 2025, it was held in September.

See Fig. IV-4-2 (Advancing Initiatives Aimed at Effectiveness of Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Procurement); Chapter 2, Section 1-2-2 (3) (Industry Day)

Fig. IV-4-2 Advancing Initiatives Aimed at Effectiveness of Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Procurement



Major equipment acquired through FMS

[Ground Self-Defense Force]
V-22 Osprey

[Maritime Self-Defense Force]
SM-6
SM-3 Block IIA
Tomahawk

[Air Self-Defense Force]
F-15 fighter jet (capabilities improvement)
F-35A fighter jet
F-35B fighter jet
AIM-120 (air-to-air missile)
KC-46A aerial refueling/transport aircraft
E-2D airborne early warning aircraft

◯**[Reference] Examples of FMS procurement** * The amount of FMS



F-35A fighter jet
[Lockheed Martin]
FY2026 budget: 149.3 billion yen



F-35B fighter jet
[Lockheed Martin]
FY2026 budget: 72.5 billion yen



KC-46A aerial refueling/transport aircraft
[Boeing]
FY2026 budget: 87.7 billion yen



SM-3 Block IIA
[Raytheon]
FY2026 budget: 72.3 billion yen

Part V

Reinforcing the Human Resource Base

Chapter 1 The Professionalism of JSDF Personnel

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

Chapter 1

The Professionalism of JSDF Personnel

Japan stands at the forefront of dramatic changes in the global balance of power. Military buildups and increasingly active military activities in Japan's periphery are making the surrounding environment more severe and more uncertain. At the same time, the international order that has underpinned the peace and prosperity of the international community is facing significant challenges. While confronting these realities, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) bear the responsibility of safeguarding the peace that enables the people to live with a sense of safety and allows Japan to keep developing and prospering, as well as of preserving the independence that enables Japan to determine its own direction in politics, economy, and society and maintain its culture, tradition, and sense of values.

Only the MOD/JSDF can directly protect Japan's territorial land, waters, and airspace, as well as the lives and property of the people residing there, which are necessary for the continued existence of the Japanese state amid evolving times and societal changes. Keeping in mind "defending Japan," the unwavering mission borne solely by the MOD/JSDF, we have continuously sought to improve ourselves.

Should an invasion of Japan ever occur, we will disrupt and repel the invasion to defend Japan. Furthermore, we respond promptly and appropriately not only to armed invasions but also to threats arising from natural disasters and other events. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, we devote our utmost efforts to relief activities. We provide livelihood support at evacuation centers and related facilities in cooperation with local governments, relevant ministries and agencies, and others, with a clear division of roles to ensure that various situations can be addressed.

In order to protect the peace and independence of Japan, inherited through the efforts of our predecessors, and to maintain day-to-day normalcy, the MOD/JSDF tackles security challenges by bringing together all know-how, including cutting-edge technologies.

JSDF personnel serve at camps, bases, and aboard vessels throughout Japan, along with carrying out missions on remote islands, at sea, and overseas. The working environment and types of missions and duties are wide ranging, including warning and 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 for affected people at disaster sites. These missions are among the characteristics of service in the JSDF.

To ensure readiness for any harsh environment or unforeseen situation, personnel consistently engage in rigorous training, inspections, information gathering, and warning and surveillance. In the contemporary security environment, where the distinction between peacetime and contingency has become blurred, these daily missions and duties themselves form the foundation supporting the safety of the nation and its people.

The activities carried out by JSDF personnel are often not visible to the public. Many missions conducted at sea, in airspace, at night, or under poor weather conditions are executed steadily but may go unnoticed. Even under such circumstances, JSDF personnel consistently perform their missions in compliance with laws and regulations.

Every member of the JSDF is a professional who is entrusted with the unwavering mission of protecting Japan's peace and independence and is expected to deliver results. Although their specialties, duties, and places of assignment may differ, all personnel fulfill important responsibilities within their respective fields.

Part V explains about JSDF personnel who form the core element of Japan's defense capability, as well as about the human resource base.



Saluting the national flag

Section 1 JSDF Personnel Fulfilling Their Missions across Diverse Duty Stations

The MOD/JSDF is composed of uniformed JSDF personnel, administrative officials, technical officials, instructors, and others. All personnel carry out their respective missions with a high sense of morale and pride.

1 Uniformed JSDF Personnel

Japan consists of around 14,000 islands. In order to defend this vast land surrounded by the sea on all sides, uniformed JSDF personnel fulfill their responsibilities 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, without regard for personal danger even under harsh conditions at home and overseas.

The JSDF conducts activities to protect Japan's territorial land, waters, and airspace under the mission of safeguarding the nation's peace and independence. The Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) maintains readiness through initial response units operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, engaging in continuous training in preparation for disaster relief operations, contingencies, and other events to protect the lives of the people at their closest level. The Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) conducts round-the-clock, year-round activities, such as warning and surveillance, to contribute to the peace and stability of the expansive territorial waters of Japan, a maritime nation. The Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) protects Japan's airspace, performing scrambles day and night and ensuring the stable use of outer space. The deterrence of Japan is sustained by the presence and activities of these JSDF services and their personnel.

In recent years, threats utilizing cyberspace, the maritime domain, outer space, and the electromagnetic spectrum have intensified rapidly, and the JSDF has expanded its activities into an increasingly diverse range of fields.

In addition, in order to protect the lives and property of the people in the event of large-scale natural disasters, aircraft accidents, and other events, the JSDF maintains readiness to conduct swift life-saving operations, search activities, and the transportation of emergency patients from remote islands and other areas. To ensure prompt and appropriate responses to various forms of disaster, disaster relief operation plans are formulated, and regular training is conducted to enhance the effectiveness of those plans.

Furthermore, the JSDF engages in international peace activities aimed at resolving global issues, such as terrorism and regional conflicts. As cooperation with other countries grows in importance, each dispatched personnel is expected to play a lead role in Japan's international peace cooperation activities and related missions.

Within the JSDF, there are commissioned officers (COs) who command units and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) who form the core of those units.

COs must be able to understand the missions of each JSDF service and the codes of conduct 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. Bringing together the will and capabilities of all unit members is essential to accomplish any mission. COs who lead junior colleagues bear responsibility not only for protecting the lives of the people, but also for the uniformed JSDF personnel serving under them. COs who are responsible for maintaining the foundation of national defense and possess outstanding leadership skills play a major role.

NCOs are field specialists who form the core of units and play an active role. Following enlistment, they develop the qualities required of GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF NCOs through the educational program of each service, while also acquiring the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for unit assignments. Subsequent education and training curricula are designed to cultivate personnel into specialists in their respective fields. JSDF specialties are highly diverse and NCOs who are skilled and professional are indispensable in every field.

JSDF personnel work hard on the front lines to protect the lives of the people. It is an important mission of the MOD/JSDF to create an environment where they can perform their missions with pride and honor, and to ensure that their families can await the personnel's return with peace of mind.



New personnel induction ceremony FY2025

2 Defense Officials, Instructors, and Other Talent

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.

Several countries and regions surrounding Japan possess significant military capabilities, including nuclear weapons, and there has been a pronounced trend toward intensifying military activities. Against this backdrop, administrative officials specialists in defense policy who help preserve peace, protect Japan, and secure its future are expected to play an ever more active role. Effective defense policies aligned with Japan's national interests require capable organizations and qualified personnel to develop and implement them. Furthermore, the JSDF cannot be operated without a legal framework. As the MOD/JSDF can fulfill their missions only with the trust and understanding of the Japanese people, they must also communicate clearly with the public and provide accurate information. The balance of power among nations is becoming increasingly complex and the use of new domains, such as outer space, cyberspace, and the electromagnetic spectrum, is expanding rapidly, transforming the security environment in profound ways. Even amid these rapid changes, administrative officials play a key role in addressing a wide range of security challenges in order to protect Japan's peace and security.

They also carry out administrative and logistical functions necessary to establish the foundations for unit operations at camps, bases, and other facilities throughout Japan. For example, at the General Service Units established within GSDF camps, administrative officials perform services related to the maintenance and management of camp and maneuver area facilities, as well as welfare services for assigned personnel.

At MSDF supply depots, administrative officials are responsible for calculating and procuring the necessary quantities of aircraft components equipment. At the ASDF, administrative officials are responsible for contract administration with private-sector companies for the maintenance and repair of ground-based radars and radio equipment.

In addition to these responsibilities, administrative officials at the Staff Offices which serve as the central headquarters of each JSDF service, formulate a wide range of plans and contribute to strengthening the operational foundations of each service while coordinating not only within the MOD but also with other ministries and agencies. Furthermore, at the Provincial Cooperation Offices, which serve as the primary liaison between the JSDF and local communities, administrative officials provide support to uniformed personnel throughout their careers, from enlistment and training to their transition after leaving the service.

Administrative officials play a vital role in connecting the various organizations of the MOD/JSDF and enabling each to perform its functions.

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 development of equipment essential for JSDF's operations, and providing mental health care for JSDF personnel.

Japan's Peace and security cannot be realized solely through the efforts of the approximately 240,000 JSDF personnel serving throughout the country and the systems that support this large organization. The defense of Japan depends on defense facilities, such as camps and bases, as well as defense equipment, including vehicles, vessels, and aircraft. Technical officials contribute to Japan's peace and security by leveraging their technical expertise, to ensure the stable maintenance and availability of the MOD's diverse defense facilities and equipment, enabling the JSDF to respond to any situation.

The roles and responsibilities of technical officials continue to expand. Drawing on their technical expertise, they formulate and develop policies related to defense equipment. In addition, they conduct capability analyses to support unit operations and defense capability development by applying mathematical analysis and evaluation methods based on extensive scientific and engineering knowledge. Technical officials play an indispensable role within the MOD/JSDF, supporting Japan's security to protect Japanese people by ensuring the maintenance and availability of defense facilities and equipment and helping to ensure that Japan's defense capabilities remain effective against evolving threats.

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.

In recent years, the JSDF has needed to secure highly qualified personnel capable of adapting to the increasing diversification and internationalization of its missions. The know-how accumulated over the 70 years since the establishment of the JSDF, together with the experience built up by previous generations, has been passed down

throughout the organization through its instructors. The specialized expertise possessed by these instructors makes a significant contribution to Japan's national security.

VOICE

Voice of JSDF Personnel's Family Member (Child)

Child of MINOWA Yuta, Petty Officer Second Class (MSDF), Boatswain's Mate (Yokosuka), JS Enshu Auxiliary Multipurpose Support (AMS) Ship

My father rides a ship called JS Enshu of the Maritime Self-Defense Force. When Typhoon No. 22 recently hit Japan, it caused a water shortage on Hachijo Island, and water trucks were needed. My father left home, saying he had to join a disaster relief operation. He loaded water trucks onto the ship and immediately delivered them to Hachijo Island. When I heard this story, I was amazed. He said that the wind and waves were strong, and it was very difficult to unload the water trucks from the ship. When the news showed images of Hachijo Island, I saw that not only my father's ship, but many other people also worked in various ways amid really strong winds. It made me think that if we were ever in trouble, they would come to help us. I was truly impressed by the JSDF personnel.



A vehicle being offloaded amid heavy swells


Petty Officer Second Class Minowa and his children

VOICE

Voice of JSDF Personnel's Family Member (Spouse)

Spouse of MURAYAMA Shunsuke, Sergeant First Class (GSDF), Supply Sergeant, 103rd Aviation Unit (Kisarazu), 1st Transportation Helicopter Group

Perhaps it is because my husband serves in the JSDF. Whether it is being on time or tidying up, his sincerity always shines through his actions. When he leaves early in the morning or will be away for a disaster relief operation or an extended training, he tells me, "Thanks for looking after the house." I sense in his words a certain trust in our family and resolve toward his duties as JSDF personnel. After our two sons were born, he took about a month of childcare leave for both of them. He was with me when I struggled with the unfamiliar challenges of parenting and housework. He even helped with late-night feedings, diaper changes, bathing the baby, and preparing meals. It was his support that allowed me to get through the challenges, and I am deeply grateful for that.

On his days off, he makes time for his family, finding joy in the little things in life like going to the park or shopping together. When I am tired from housework, he thoughtfully takes the children out, giving me time to myself. His subtle kindness is very heartwarming.

As his wife and family member, I am proud of my husband who is both a diligent man at work and a caring father at home. I hope we can continue to support one another in our journey ahead.



Sergeant First Class Murayama spending time with his son

VOICE

Providing the Backbone of the Stable Use of the Space Domain

SATO Yasunari, Staff Sergeant, System Management Section, 1st Space System Squadron (Fuchu), Space Operations Group

Our mission of monitoring the vast outer space is supported by ground-based systems.

My job is to keep the Space Situational Awareness (SSA) operational system running stably, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. I perform diverse daily duties, ranging from system maintenance and management, coordinating with highly specialized private enterprises and supervising their work, to monitoring for cyberattacks. These duties form the foundational basis of Japan's space security.

The space domain today cannot be discussed in isolation from the cyber domain. In the aggression against Ukraine, large-scale cyberattacks have been launched on satellite communication networks. As these attacks demonstrate, space and cyberspace are increasingly integrated and inseparable domains in recent years. Cyberattacks on systems significantly impact the execution of our mission and create critical gaps in the stable use of outer space. As such, cyber defense, including initial response, continues to rise in importance. At the field level, we place constant emphasis on coordination with cyber units and maintain a robust monitoring posture.

In modern warfare, the sustained and stable use of the space domain is essential for advanced operations across the land, maritime, and air domains. Through system operations, I find tremendous fulfillment in supporting our mission in the space domain, which is key to cross-

domain operations. I will continue to devote myself to my daily duties to ensure the uninterrupted operation of systems that constitute the backbone of national defense.



On the job, 1st Space System Squadron

VOICE

Finding Hidden Gems to Protect Japan

Official, Intelligence Analyst, Defense Intelligence Headquarters (Ichigaya)

This year marks 20 years since I joined the Ministry. Over these years, I have acquired necessary knowledge and experience as an intelligence analyst through assignments at the Defense Intelligence Headquarters and the Defense Intelligence Division within the Bureau of Defense Policy, as well as through trainings, study abroad, and embassy assignments. In my current role, I examine political, diplomatic, and military information related to my region of responsibility, determine which information is critical to Japan's security, and direct my team to analyze and report the information to senior officials. I also exchange views with other ministries and agencies, foreign governments and militaries, as well as experts and provide interpretation. Each country has its own perspective and they are a constant source of stimulation.

Intelligence work includes searching through countless pieces of information to find hidden gems that can inform policy. Ever since my supervisor advised me in my 20s that "perseverance determines success," I have worked meticulously, driven by the conviction that if I failed to spot a critical piece of information, Japan itself might miss it. I presently work in a department that handles all-source intelligence, such as signals and imagery. While the work is rewarding, I also feel a need to inform the public at large about the seriousness of the security situation through outlets such as the Defense of Japan.



A Defense Intelligence Headquarters meeting (illustrative image)

VOICE

As a Professional in the Electromagnetic Domain

TANAKA Yuki, Captain (GSDF), Undisclosed, Electronic Warfare Operations Unit (Asaka)

Since December 2021, I have been a member of the Ground Self-Defense Force's unit specializing in the electromagnetic domain. I am engaged in electronic warfare activities to help achieve Japan's superiority in the electromagnetic domain. Prior to this role, I was assigned to the Electronic Warfare Operations Unit Readiness Office within the Operations Department of the Ground Component Command Headquarters.

I exchange views and participate in joint trainings on the ground with a variety of organizations, including foreign organizations, the Maritime and Air Self-Defense Forces, relevant ministries and agencies, and external institutions, ensuring Japan's readiness for electromagnetic domain warfare to contribute to joint and integrated operations under any conditions.

In addition, to enhance my knowledge and capabilities required for warfare in the electromagnetic domain, I attend section study sessions where personnel contribute ideas regardless of rank, as well as various trainings. Through public-private collaboration, I continuously update my knowledge of global technological trends in system communications and the electromagnetic domain and dedicate myself to daily training. I am committed to performing my duties with a strong sense of determination and fulfillment as a member serving on the front line in this domain.



The author (left) providing an explanation on electronic warfare equipment

VOICE

Contributing to Peace through Music

MIZUKAMI Marina, Sergeant, Band, Vocal, GSDF Western Army Band (Kengun)

Hana wa saku, itsuka umareru kimi no tameni

This is a verse from the lyrics of "Hana wa Saku," a piece that the Western Army Band performed at "Military Music: Oman and the World" in the Sultanate of Oman's capital of Muscat in 2022. The Omani audience listened to the song intently, despite not understanding the Japanese lyrics.

It was a valuable experience to participate in this event, as it made me realize that music transcends all barriers and reaches the hearts of people, even if their country of birth, environment, or language is different.

I got the same feeling when I sang "Turandot" at the Japan Self-Defense Forces Marching Festival 2025 at Nippon Budokan. The Japanese audience seemed to listen to the foreign-language song as earnestly as the people of Oman, and this overlap has further deepened my appreciation for the power of music.

Five years after joining the JSDF, my daily training and performances have renewed my belief in the power of music to convey the value of peace and to share the activities and messages of the JSDF across society. I hope that my commitment to music will give encouragement to fellow personnel and inspire them to take pride in their duties.

I believe that contributing to society through musical

performances is the very purpose of JSDF bands.

What should we do to ensure that Japan enjoys peace into the future as it has for the past 80 long years? To contribute through music, I will dedicate my JSDF career to continuing my performances.



Western Army Band Tour Concert in Oita 2025



JSDF Marching Festival 2025

Section 2 Career Advancement of JSDF Personnel

Not all personnel of the Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) are fully qualified professionals at the time they join the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and the 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.

In order to carry out the missions, including national defense, the JSDF needs to ensure that all personnel have high levels of knowledge, skills, and physical strength, as well as unit readiness. Moreover, personnel must be ready to demonstrate these capabilities under any circumstances. This enables the JSDF to respond swiftly and appropriately to a range of situations while simultaneously serving as a deterrent by discouraging states from launching an aggression against Japan. Within the MOD/JSDF, education and training are of critical importance in strengthening the human capabilities necessary for the execution of JSDF missions. Accordingly, while ensuring compliance with laws and regulations and exercising the utmost care to prevent accidents and assure safety, the MOD/JSDF provides personnel education and unit training in order to develop highly capable personnel and units, while also striving to maintain and enhance combat readiness.

For example, training for new recruits is conducted to instill them with the fundamental knowledge and technical skills required of JSDF personnel, as well as the basic rules of collective conduct that form the foundation of JSDF conduct. Uniformed JSDF personnel first receive training at their assigned training units, where, while living communally, they learn service discipline and acquire the competencies required of uniformed JSDF personnel, such as the handling of weapons. Through such training, personnel gain technical skills as well as a deeper understanding of the importance of national defense and the missions of the JSDF.

Furthermore, throughout their entire service, training tailored to rank and duties are offered at schools, units, and other institutions. Phased and systematic education allows personnel to cultivate the qualities and acquire the knowledge and technical skills needed by uniformed JSDF personnel. In addition, for knowledge that is difficult to acquire within the JSDF, education and training are, as necessary, entrusted to universities, including overseas studies, as well as domestic companies, research institutes, and other institutions to further develop expertise and technical skills. Enhancing the capabilities of each uniformed JSDF personnel who make up a unit is indispensable to the execution of unit missions, and the qualities cultivated in this manner are directly linked to the security of Japan.



National Security Strategist Studies Program, National Institute for Defense Studies

In this way, the MOD/JSDF continuously strengthens its human resource base because JSDF personnel constitute the very core of defense capability. Neither the planning and formulation of defense policies to protect peace, nor the operation of increasingly advanced equipment would be possible without JSDF personnel. For this reason, it is important that each member of the JSDF continues to grow as a professional in accordance with their aspirations and aptitudes.

However, as Japan faces the most severe security environment since the end of World War II, intensified competition for talent with the private sector and other organizations has made the recruitment and retention of capable personnel challenging. Should the MOD/JSDF be unable to secure talented personnel, the execution of missions including the defense of Japan could be affected. Therefore, it is an urgent priority to improve the treatment of personnel, as well as enhance both job satisfaction and ease of working to make the MOD/JSDF an attractive workplace where individuals aspire to work and continue their careers.

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.



Bidding farewell to personnel retiring due to reaching the mandatory retirement age

See Fig. V-1-2-1 (Career Plans for JSDF Personnel (Non-Commissioned Officers))
See Fig. V-1-2-2 (Career Plans for JSDF Personnel (Officers))
See Fig. V-1-2-3 (Career Plans for JSDF Personnel (Administrative Officials))

Fig. V-1-2-1 Career Plans for JSDF Personnel (Non-Commissioned Officers)

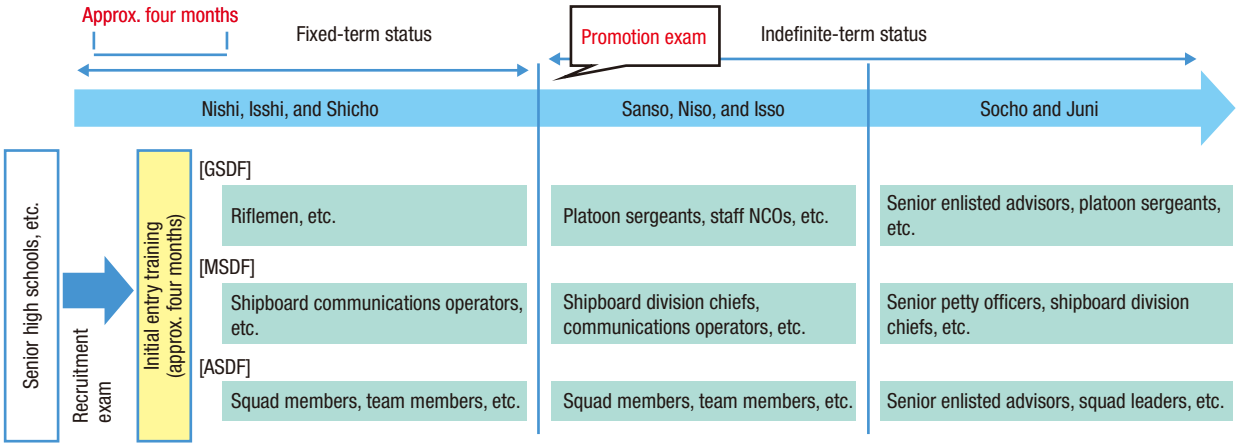


Fig. V-1-2-2 Career Plans for JSDF Personnel (Officers)

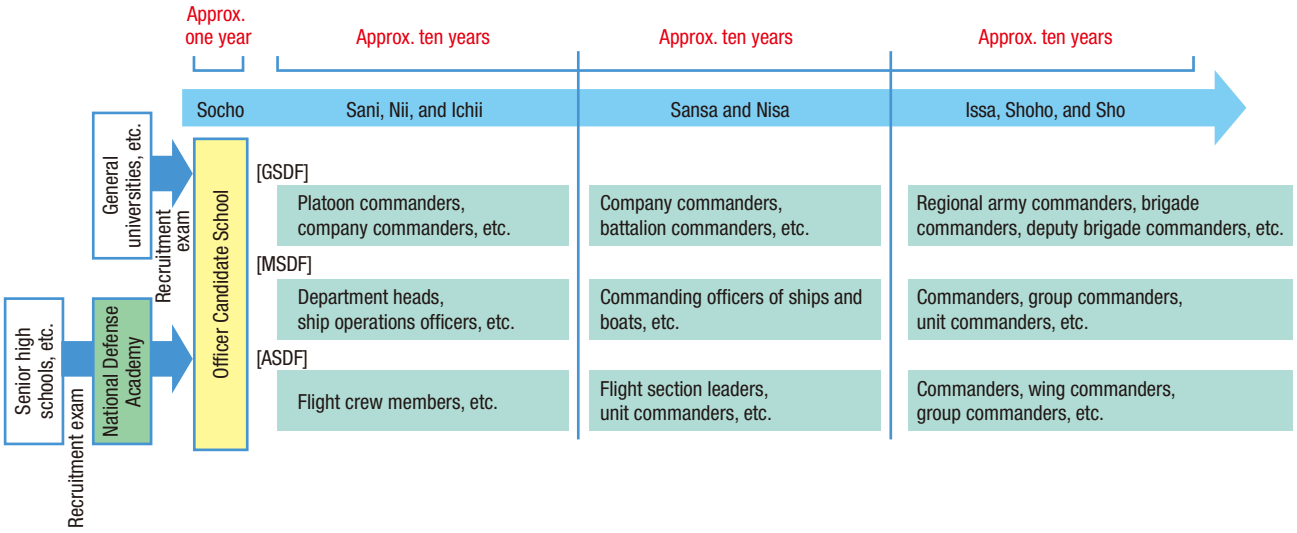
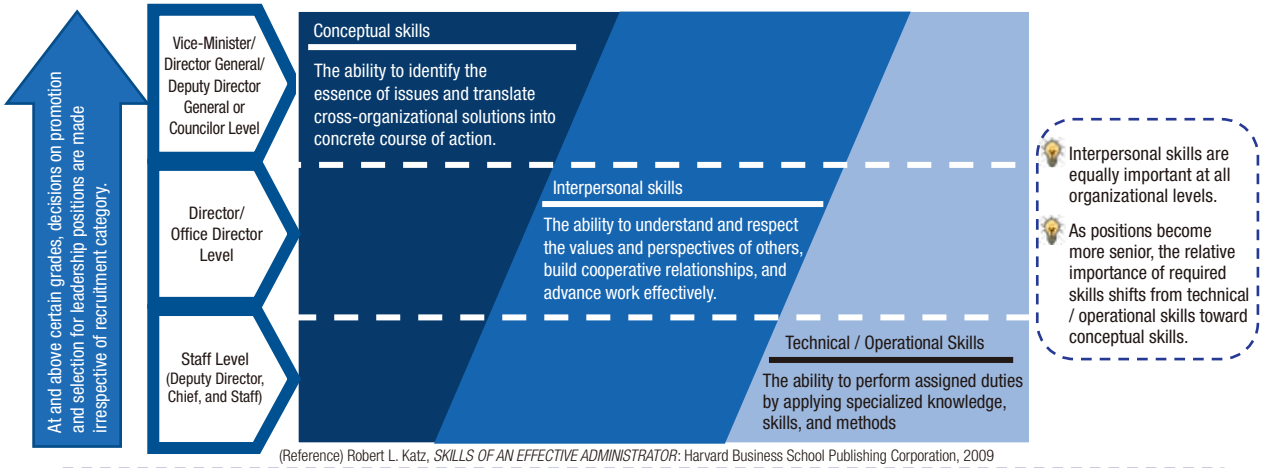


Fig. V-1-2-3 Career Plans for JSDF Personnel (Administrative Officials)



(Reference) Robert L. Katz, *SKILLS OF AN EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATOR*: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, 2009

The MOD/JSDF develops employees' skills by incorporating coaching and other communication methods and approaches into training programs at all levels from an early stage, while selecting participants in consideration of their positions and occupational field. (The following is an example from FY2026)

Coaching	A method of supporting employees in achieving their goals by drawing out their potential through effective questioning.
Resilience	The ability to recover flexibly even when facing stress. Positive human relationships provide the foundation for resilience.
Logical thinking	Building positive relationships through communication that engages both emotions and logic.
Job crafting	A concept that enhances work motivation by proactively redesigning (1) work processes, (2) interpersonal relationships, and (3) perspectives toward work.

VOICE

Air Self-Defense Force Personnel Serving in a Remote Area

SHINAGAWA Kazuhisa, Master Sergeant (ASDF), Radio Maintenance Section Chief,
Tosashimizu Communications Unit (Tosashimizu), Western Aircraft Control and Warning Wing

I am in charge of maintenance and management of communications and electronic equipment at the Tosashimizu Sub Base, located in Tosashimizu City, Kochi Prefecture, the westernmost point of Shikoku. While the area is blessed with a beautiful natural environment and marine resources, it is far from Kochi City, where the prefectural offices are, or Kochi Airport, and both require a three-hour drive to reach. There are only a few personnel at this sub base, but we all work together to execute our communications mission, trainings, and public relations work. Beginning in FY2025, we became eligible to receive the special duty allowance. We are grateful that our specialized mission and working conditions have been taken into consideration. This has also boosted our motivation. Going forward, I will continue to fulfill my role here with steadfast dedication.



On the building's rooftop

VOICE

Recognizing Self-Growth

KONISHI Koki, Leading Seaman (MSDF), Assault Team Member, JS Zuiryu Submarine (Yokosuka)

It has been five years since I joined the Maritime Self-Defense Force and four years since I became a submarine crew member.

During elementary school, I watched the news about the Great East Japan Earthquake and saw the JSDF helping people. I thought they were so cool, which is why I decided to join the JSDF.

When I first entered, I did not know anything and was constantly learning from others. I am not naturally gifted, and I make mistakes like anyone else. Therefore, I worried about whether I would be able to survive. However, thanks to the guidance of my senior colleagues, I have been able to continue for five years.

The moment when I work with my teammates, fulfill my responsibility, and think I made a contribution to accomplishing a goal, I am glad I joined the JSDF and feel I am doing something meaningful. It is precisely because of these moments that I am able to persevere through difficult times, and why I believe I can continue to grow in this career.

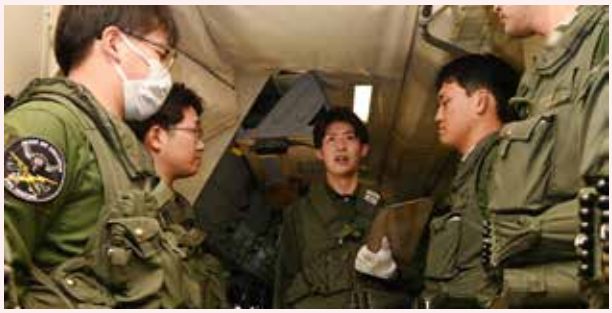


Conducting operations

KANDA Yusuke, Lieutenant Commander (MSDF), Squadron Crew, Air Reconnaissance Squadron 81 (Iwakuni)

When I sit in the cockpit as the captain of a fixed-wing patrol aircraft, I realize that the knowledge, skills, and command judgment I trained hard to acquire now come naturally to me. During training, I could only think about piloting the aircraft and making operational decisions and nothing else. However, as I gradually gained experience and overcame each challenge before me, I have become able to take a panoramic perspective of the whole aircraft and mission to make the best possible decision.

Now that I am in a position where I instruct junior pilots and bear responsibility for the entire mission, I realize for the first time that I have grown professionally. I have also matured a lot personally, particularly my mentality and sense of responsibility. When hard work pays off and translates into mission accomplished, I feel a great sense of fulfillment that is unique to this profession.



Preflight briefing

KINOSHITA Masahito, Captain (MSDF), Commander, Fleet Surface Force 4 (Ominato)

Nearly 22 years into my JSDF career, I was appointed commander of an escort division that commands multiple destroyers. I have served a range of assignments at sea and ashore over the years, including commanding officer of a destroyer, and developed my skills as a JSDF officer. In addition, through receiving diverse and specialized education, including studying in the United States, I have been able to broaden my knowledge and perspective and advance professionally. These experiences and knowledge have helped me to grow and have brought me to where I am today. Although the position of escort division commander carries significant responsibility, I feel tremendous fulfillment in being able to lead a destroyer unit under my command. While I still have much more to learn and do not intend to stop learning, I will focus not only on developing personally but also on developing the next generation by passing on the experiences and knowledge I have gained.



The author assuming command as escort division commander

Chapter 2

Improving the Treatment and Working Environments and Establishing New Lifetime Career Plans of JSDF Personnel

Section 1 Ministerial Meeting on Improving the Treatment and Working Environments and Establishing New Lifetime Career Plans of Self-Defense Forces Personnel

The "Ministerial Meeting on Improving the Treatment and Working Environments and Establishing New Lifetime Career Plans of Self-Defense Forces Personnel" was established in October 2024, chaired by the Prime Minister and composed of a broad range of members, including the Chief Cabinet Secretary, the Defense Minister, and other ministers of ministries and agencies involved in the re-employment of uniformed Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) personnel who retired at a young age. Following four meetings, the "Basic Policy on Improving the Treatment and Working Environments and Establishing New Lifetime Career Plans of Self-Defense Forces Personnel" (hereinafter the "Basic Policy") was formulated in December of the same year. The Ministry of Defense (MOD) and the JSDF have implemented various measures based on the Basic Policy, and at the fifth Ministerial Meeting in June 2025 and the sixth Ministerial Meeting in December of the same year, it was confirmed that these measures were yielding tangible results.

Moving forward, the relevant cabinet ministers will continue to collaborate to establish a comprehensive system that enables uniformed JSDF personnel to dedicate themselves with peace of mind to the vital mission of national defense.

The Public Opinion Survey on the Self Defense Forces and Defense Issues conducted by the Cabinet Office shows that 90% of the citizens hold a favorable impression of the Self-Defense Forces. This survey result is undoubtedly a testament to the unwavering efforts of JSDF personnel, who have been sincerely engaged in disaster relief operations and various other missions for more than 70 years since the JSDF's establishment. Despite the favorable impression of the JSDF, however, securing human resources for uniformed JSDF personnel remains a significant challenge. While the plan for FY2024 was to employ approximately 15,000 JSDF personnel, the actual number employed did not reach 10,000. Furthermore, the number of personnel who retired mid-career was approximately 5,600, albeit less than that in the previous fiscal year. Meanwhile, in FY2025, approximately 11,000 personnel were employed compared to the plan to employ approximately 15,000 personnel, while the number of personnel who retired mid-career decreased by approximately 1,000 from the previous fiscal year to approximately 4,600. As the figures demonstrate, the measures implemented under the Basic Policy had some effects on recruitment, employment, and curbing mid-career retirement in FY2025. Nevertheless, as the JSDF continues to fall short of its target personnel levels, with the sufficiency rate[1] standing at approximately 90%, securing human resources for uniformed JSDF personnel remains a matter of critical importance.

The organizational culture—where personnel undertaking the demanding mission of national defense are inherently expected to endure harsh conditions on a daily basis—poses a significant obstacle to securing and retaining personnel. This challenge needs to be addressed with a strong sense of urgency in order to transform the JSDF into an organization that places emphasis on individual personnel's satisfaction and ease of working, while also enhancing job satisfaction.

JSDF personnel firsthand safeguard Japan's peace and independence and maintain national security; given the



REFERENCE: Initiatives to improve JSDF personnel treatment (ministerial meeting)
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/profile/treatment/index.html



REFERENCE: The Report of the Expert Panel on Reinforcing the Human Resource Base of the MOD/JSDF
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/policy/agenda/meeting/kiban/index.html

1 The percentage indicating the extent to which the current number of JSDF personnel meets the authorized strength.

unique nature of their duties, it is inevitable that they must bear various burdens and restrictions. Therefore, JSDF personnel need to be provided with treatment that reflects the unique nature of their duties. Accordingly, personnel management and salary systems that differ from those of other national public employees have been established for JSDF personnel as special national public employees. It is crucial to continue appropriately valuing the unique nature of their duties and to provide treatment that ensures they feel proud and honored to choose a career as JSDF personnel. Furthermore, given that many JSDF personnel retire at age 56, it is crucial to ensure they do not feel insecure about re-employment and subsequent career opportunities and income security in order to effectively secure personnel. To address JSDF personnel's future concerns, it is essential to expand re-employment opportunities in which they can leverage their acquired knowledge, skills, and experience, and to guarantee income security for their livelihood.

In recognition of these issues, the Basic Policy states that concrete measures would be implemented to improve the treatment and working environment of JSDF personnel and to establish their new lifetime career plans. In the FY2026 budget, the MOD allocated approximately 581.4 billion yen for related expenses.

See Reference 80 (Basic Policy on Improving the Treatment and Working Environments and Establishing New Lifetime Career Plans of Self-Defense Forces Personnel (Provisional translation))

1 Improvement of Treatment for JSDF Personnel

Based on the Basic Policy, improvements of treatment, including 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 missions 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 who form the core of the units, bringing the compensation of all JSDF personnel to the highest level in history.

In addition, the MOD/JSDF aims to undertake an independent revision of the JSDF personnel's compensation structure in FY2027, marking the first review of its kind since the establishment of the JSDF approximately 70 years ago.

2 Improvement of Living and Working Environments

To enhance performance across the JSDF, it is essential to create an environment that improves both job satisfaction and ease of working, where each JSDF personnel feels a sense of purpose in their work.

To this end, the MOD/JSDF will continue to take initiatives that include reforming organizational culture, introducing individual space for each personnel in barracks, improving the living and working environments for onboard crews, improvement of housing environments, promoting the development of the communication environment, and improving access to bases and camps located in areas with limited public transportation. In addition, efforts will be made to build environments where JSDF personnel can focus on their duties without anxiety about balancing childcare or nursing care, to enhance environments that promote the active role of women, and to improve clothing, food services, and health management systems, including daily uniforms and workwear of personnel.

3 Establishment of New Lifetime Career Plans

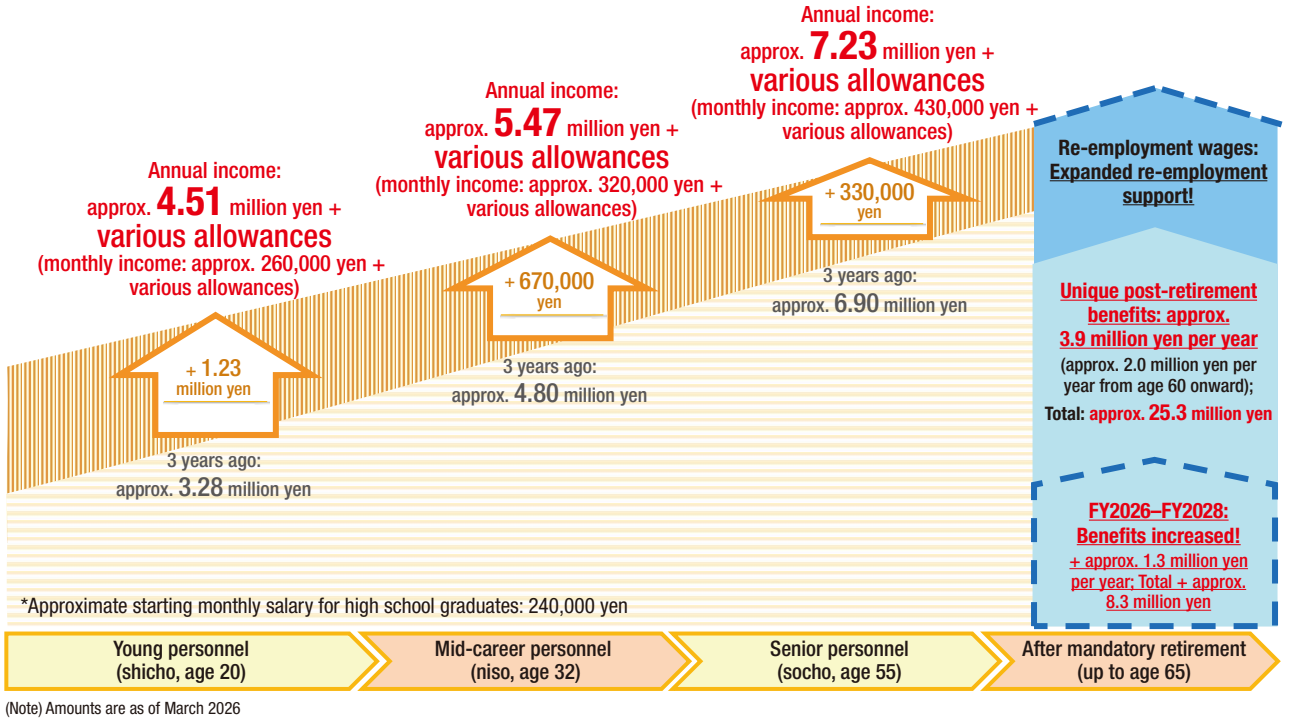
The income level of retired JSDF personnel after mandatory retirement generally declines to slightly more than 70% of their income at the time of retirement following young-age retirement, and further declines to 70% of that level by the age of 60. In light of this situation, it is necessary to secure and increase post-retirement income for JSDF personnel, who retire at a younger age than general national public employees.

In FY2026, the system for post-service re-employment support for JSDF personnel who take an early retirement, which was previously provided only at the time of separation from service, will be expanded, enabling the support to

continue until the age of 65. In this way, the MOD/JSDF will facilitate the establishment of more comprehensive lifetime career plans than ever before.

See Fig. V-2-1 (Illustration of the Increase in the Lifetime Income for JSDF Personnel (Model Case Based on the Current Income Figures for a Member Who Enlists as a Private and Retires as a Sergeant Major))

Fig. V-2-1 Illustration of the Increase in the Lifetime Income for JSDF Personnel (Model Case Based on the Current Income Figures for a Member Who Enlists as a Private and Retires as a Sergeant Major)



(Note) Amounts are as of March 2026

4 Other Initiatives

In addition to the above initiatives, we will also strengthen efforts to secure high-quality human resources, efforts to gain broad public understanding of JSDF personnel's contributions to safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of the people, and efforts to improve the social standing of JSDF personnel. The Japanese people have high expectations especially of the JSDF, and it is indispensable for the JSDF to gain their support and trust all the time to fully exercise its ability to complete its duties.

Accordingly, we will continually enhance compliance and auditing functions, including to prevent human error and misconduct through systemization and digitization, and create an environment where the JSDF and each personnel can always perform their duties with a high sense of mission and ethics.

Additionally, the MOD/JSDF will promote public understanding of JSDF activities in defense, security, and disaster response through the dispatch of instructors to courses at relevant institutions and other initiatives, by leveraging the MOD/JSDF's knowledge and experience. Moreover, from the perspective of reinforcing the MOD/JSDF's human resource base, the HR Development Planning Office was established within the MOD's Bureau of Personnel and Education in April 2025. In addition to enhancing the MOD's human resource consideration framework, a new section responsible for identifying and verifying the effectiveness of related policies was established within the office in April 2026.

A range of initiatives will continue to be undertaken, including collaborating with local governments on JSDF personnel recruitment and enhancing public relations and recruitment efforts to promote JSDF personnel employment.

Section 2 Various Measures for Reinforcing the Human Resource Base

1 Initiatives for Fundamentally Reinforcing the Human Resource Base

In line with the Basic Policy, in the FY2026 budget, a total of approximately 581.4 billion yen was allocated for necessary expenses of related projects, including (i) approximately 2.2 billion yen for improving the treatment of Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) personnel, (ii) approximately 571.3 billion yen for improving living and working environments, (iii) approximately 3.6 billion yen for establishing new lifetime career plans, and (iv) approximately 4.4 billion yen for other initiatives.

2 Initiatives to Reinforce the Human Resource Base

The core element of defense capability is JSDF personnel. To demonstrate defense capability, the MOD/JSDF will secure the necessary personnel and reinforce the human resource base to create an environment that enables all JSDF personnel to demonstrate their own abilities while maintaining high morale and pride.

1 Strengthening Initiatives in the Recruitment Phase

(1) Recruitment

In order for the MOD/JSDF to execute its various missions properly, it is vital to stably secure excellent human resources even in the severe recruiting environment with a decreasing number of people eligible for recruitment due to a declining birth rate. In FY2025, approximately 9,300 candidates for uniformed JSDF personnel and general candidates for enlistment (Upper) who will be E1-E3 level were recruited. The number of recruitments for general candidates for enlistment increased for the first time in five years, and that of candidates for uniformed JSDF personnel also increased significantly compared with FY2024. On the other hand, the sufficiency rate of uniformed JSDF personnel as a whole remains at approximately 90%, and securing human resources is an urgent issue. For this reason, it is necessary to recruit those with a strong desire to join the JSDF by further sufficiently explaining to those eligible for recruitment about the missions, roles, and duties of the JSDF.

In order to convey the appeal of a career as a uniformed JSDF personnel, especially to young people, the MOD/JSDF will continue to implement recruitment and public relations activities using social media and the web, including distributing recruitment and outreach videos, placing web advertisements such as banners, and enhancing the content of the uniformed JSDF personnel recruitment website. We will conduct not only conventional outreach efforts, but also bold recruitment initiatives and swift information dissemination, including through the further use of social media. In addition, the MOD/JSDF has implemented a combination of approaches to provide information to different audiences, including awareness-raising activities for active personnel, recruitment outreach activities, and public outreach activities, while also promoting awareness of improvements in personnel treatment under the Basic Policy.

Additionally, the Provincial Cooperation Offices based in 50 locations throughout Japan recruit and employ JSDF personnel, etc., attentively with the cooperation of local governments, schools, recruitment counselors, and others.

Furthermore, in line with the Basic Policy, the personnel and material infrastructure of the Provincial Cooperation Offices will be strengthened to bolster recruitment activities.

Moreover, pursuant to the Self-Defense Forces Law and other regulations, local governments carry out some of the administrative activities for recruitment, including announcing the recruitment period and promoting the JSDF as a workplace, with the MOD bearing the requisite cost. The number of municipalities from which the JSDF receives information on people eligible for recruitment stood at about two-thirds of all municipalities in FY2025. The MOD has partnered with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, aiming to collect necessary information on recruitment targets from all applicable municipalities—whether electronically or on paper—to streamline recruitment administration, and will reinforce cooperation with local governments for necessary support.

(2) Employment

a. Uniformed JSDF Personnel

Based on a voluntary system that respects individuals' free will, uniformed JSDF personnel are recruited under various categories. Additionally, personnel management[1] of uniformed JSDF personnel differs from that of general civilian public employees due to the need to maintain the

1 JSDF personnel are designated as special national public employees under Article 2 of the National Civil Service Law.

JSDF's strength. With consideration given to the knowledge, experience, physical strength, and other factors necessary to perform the duties of the respective ranks, the JSDF has an "Early Retirement System" where the majority of uniformed personnel retire after their mid-50s and a "Fixed-Term System" where one term lasts two or three years.

The MOD/JSDF newly established an "Officer Candidate Sergeants System" for recruiting individuals who will become future officers after serving for approximately five years as enlisted personnel and non-commissioned officers, and its recruitment began in FY2025. The Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) newly established "General Candidates for Officers (Specialized)" for recruiting 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 uniformed JSDF personnel who are appointed for two- or three-year terms, the Uniformed JSDF Personnel Candidate System was abolished. A new fixed-term JSDF Personnel was established, for which individuals will be recruited as uniformed JSDF personnel from the outset, and its recruitment began in FY2026. By employing personnel as uniformed JSDF personnel from the outset, their starting salary will be equivalent to that of general candidates for enlistment (Upper). In addition, as a measure until the new fixed-term system was established, the lump-sum allowance for enlisted JSDF personnel was raised to 344,000 yen in FY2025, an increase of 123,000 yen over the prevailing amount. Moreover, to strengthen the JSDF's human resource base in anticipation of future ways of warfare, the JSDF Scholarship Program[2] will be further expanded, raising the amount to 960,000 yen, an annual increase of 312,000 yen over the pre-revised amount. We are also enhancing outreach on support programs to help uniformed JSDF personnel gain various skills and facilitate "new JSDF graduates" in pursuing next steps after completing their duties, as well as broadening re-employment opportunities. With regard to employment examinations, in addition to partially introducing online employment examinations for candidates for uniformed JSDF personnel and general candidates for enlistment (Upper), we allowed concurrent applications to the GSDF, Maritime

VOICE

Voice of JSDF Personnel Who Joined as a Mid-Career Officer

YOSHIDA Satoshi, Captain (ASDF), Researcher, JASDF Air & Space Studies Institute (Meguro)

I was appointed as an Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) mid-career officer in March 2025 and am currently a researcher at the JASDF Air & Space Studies Institute of the ASDF Command and Staff College. The mid-career officer program recruits professionals who hold at least a university degree and possess experience in the field for which they apply. Upon appointment, personnel attend the Air Officer Candidate School for approximately two months, where they receive necessary training as ASDF officers before being assigned to major units throughout Japan. I was previously in the civil service, during which I performed work involving English and was seconded to other ministries and agencies. In the course of my career, I developed a strong desire to apply my English proficiency and experiences as an ASDF personnel and decided to enlist.

The JASDF Air & Space Studies Institute, where I am currently assigned, is a department dedicated to research on aviation and space, providing knowledge and value to society and the organization. Here, I conduct research on Russia drawing on English-language literature and other sources, and publish my findings both internally and externally through research reports and poster presentations. I also do interpretation and translation for the Institute's research activities and exchanges with overseas research institutes. I aspire to grow my skills and contribute to my organization as quickly as possible, while learning extensively from my senior colleagues.



The author (right) providing interpretation at a symposium hosted by the JASDF Air & Space Studies Institute

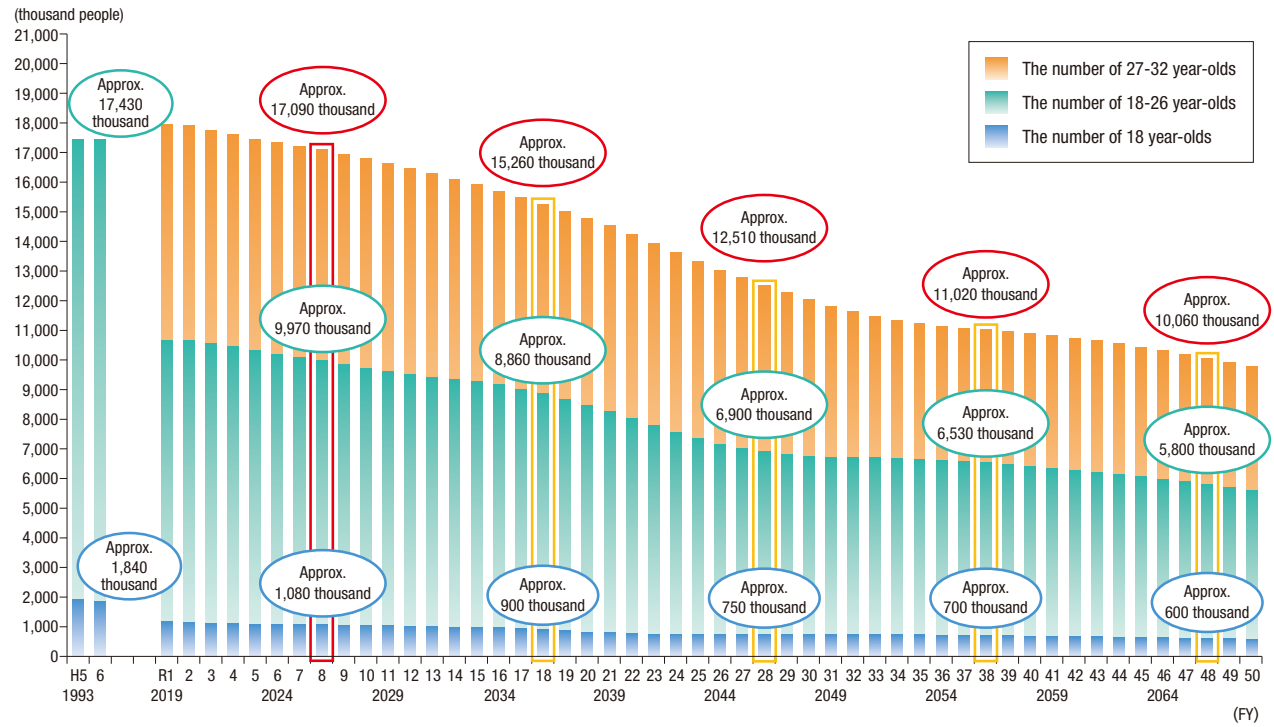
2 A scheme whereby the MOD extends educational loans to individuals who are majoring or intend to major in science, engineering, literature (languages), or law at universities (including junior colleges and graduate schools), colleges of technology, or technical schools as specified by the School Education Act, or foreign institutions equivalent to these schools and who, upon graduation (or completion), intend to apply their specialized academic expertise to continued service in the JSDF. Repayment of the loan is exempted by serving as JSDF personnel for a certain period of time.

Self-Defense Force (MSDF), and Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) general enlistment examinations starting in FY2025. Revisions to reduce examinees' burden will continue to be considered for other recruitment categories.

In terms of utilizing human resources from the private sector, we have established mid-career officer and technical sergeant systems to employ people with national qualifications for specialized techniques and people with specialized skills and knowledge that are difficult to develop efficiently in-house. Efforts have also been made to strengthen mid-career recruitment, including recruiting more former uniformed JSDF personnel who retired mid-career. Additionally, the Fixed-Term JSDF Personnel System for employing people with specialized knowledge and experience began recruiting uniformed JSDF personnel in FY2025.

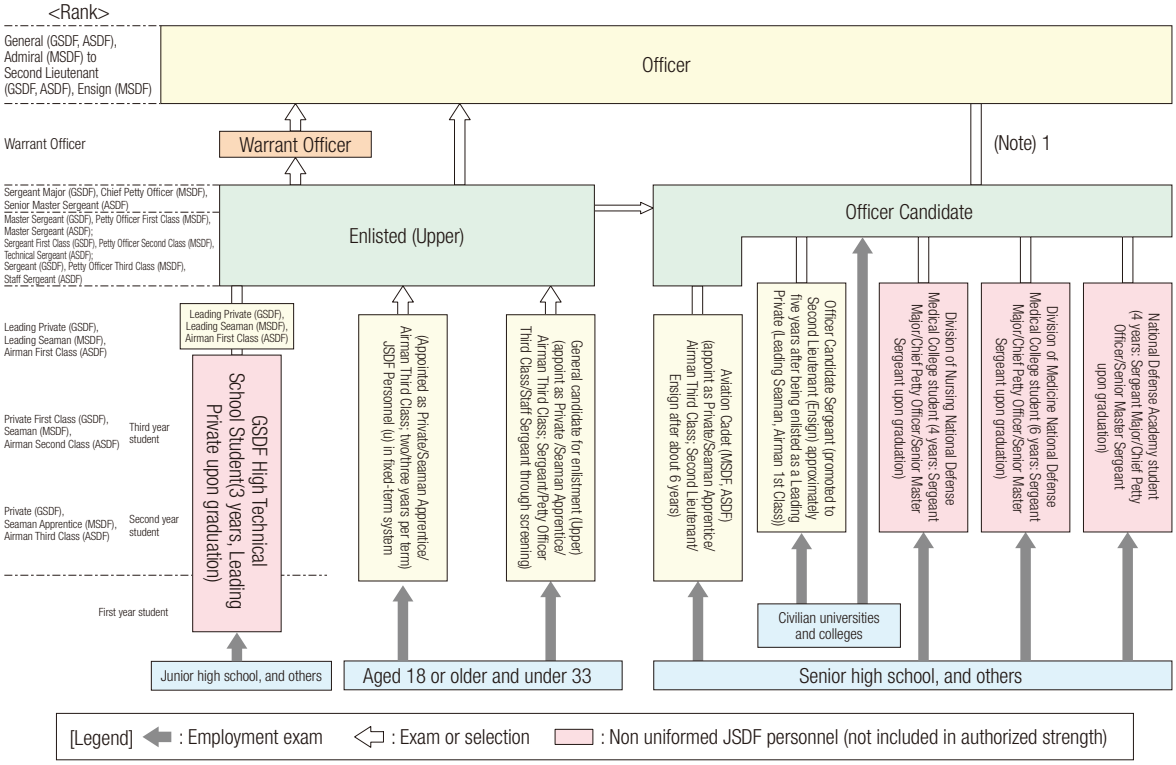
See Fig. V-2-2-1 (Changes in the Number of People Eligible for Recruitment); Fig. V-2-2-2 (Overview of Appointment System for JSDF Personnel); 2-6 (Initiatives for Retirement and Re-employment); Reference 81 (Authorized and Actual Strength of Uniformed JSDF Personnel and Changes in Them (Over the Past 10 Years)); Reference 82 (Status of Application and Recruitment of Uniformed JSDF Personnel)

Fig. V-2-2-1 Changes in the Number of People Eligible for Recruitment



Material sources: The numbers for FY1993, FY1994 and FY2019 are based on "Population Estimates of Japan 1920 - 2000" and "Current Population Estimates," Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.
Data from FY2020 onward are based on "Population Projection for Japan" (medium estimates in April 2023), National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.

Fig. V-2-2-2 Overview of Appointment System for JSDF Personnel



(Notes) (1) The graduates from prescribed education and training course are commissioned as a Second Lieutenant (GSDF and ASDF) or an Ensign (MSDF,) while the graduates with master's degree of civilian universities and colleges passed through the master's degree graduate exam as well as the graduates from National Defense Medical College School of Medicine, Dental Officer Candidates, and Pharmacist Officer Candidates are commissioned as a First Lieutenant (GSDF and ASDF) or a Lieutenant Junior Grade (MSDF).

b. Defense Officials, Instructors, and Other Talent

There are over 20,000 defense officials, instructors, and others[3] in addition to uniformed JSDF personnel in the MOD/JSDF. They are recruited through interviews from those who have passed the Recruitment Examination for Comprehensive or General Service National Public Employees conducted by the National Personnel Authority (NPA), and those who have passed the Recruitment Examination for Ministry of Defense Specialists conducted by the MOD. In recent years, initiatives have been undertaken to recruit experienced talent, fixed-term personnel on up to five-year contracts, and part-time staff.

While Japan's working-age population is on a downward trend and competition for securing talent is expected to become increasingly fierce, Japan's defense administration is expanding, diversifying, and becoming more complex. Under these circumstances, it is critically important to recruit from a strategic perspective, and with clear direction, defense officials, instructors, and other talent who, together with uniformed JSDF personnel, form the core of Japan's defense capability.

To this end, in addition to the career briefings and seminars that have been conducted for third- and fourth-year university students, the MOD holds informational sessions for first- and second-year university students and high school students and maintains dedicated recruitment websites, in order to reach a broader population and communicate the appeal of working for the MOD in an easy-to-understand manner. Furthermore, the MOD actively uses recruitment and career platforms widely used in the private sector to strengthen the recruitment of experienced individuals.

Alongside these efforts, it is equally important to cultivate an attractive organizational culture so that employees hired through these initiatives wish to continue working at the MOD. Accordingly, since FY2025, the MOD has undertaken various initiatives aimed at creating an environment where each employee can maximize their potential and thrive in their workplace. These initiatives include giving earlier notification of personnel transfers, explaining the rationale behind personnel transfers, offering internal recruitment, permitting internal side-job opportunities, and conducting and analyzing

3 Among the employees of the MOD, special national public employees are called "JSDF personnel," including administrative officials, technical officials, instructors, and others, in addition to uniformed JSDF personnel.

personnel engagement surveys. As part of these efforts, 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. Through these recent initiatives and the various measures implemented under the "Talent Management Strategy," the MOD seeks to become an organization where every employee can experience personal growth and a strong sense of contributing to national defense, while striving to meet the expectations of the Japanese people amid the most severe and complex security environment of the postwar era.

See Reference 83 (Breakdown of Ministry of Defense Employees, etc.)

2 Utilization of JSDF Reserve Personnel and others

It is essential to secure the required number of uniformed JSDF personnel promptly depending on situational changes in the event of a crisis. To secure the required number promptly and systematically, the MOD maintains the following three systems:[4] the JSDF Reserve Personnel system, the JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel system, and the Candidates for JSDF Reserve Personnel system.

JSDF Reserve Personnel, upon receiving a defense call-up order or other orders, will be commissioned as JSDF personnel and carry out logistical support and base guard duties alongside active-duty JSDF personnel. On the other hand, JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel, upon receiving a defense call-up order or other orders, will be commissioned as JSDF personnel and, as part of frontline units, undertake missions alongside active-duty JSDF personnel. Candidates for JSDF Reserve Personnel, some of whom are recruited among those with no prior experience as uniformed JSDF personnel, are appointed as JSDF Reserve Personnel after completing the necessary education and training.

To date, JSDF Reserve Personnel and Ready Reserve Personnel have been called up for large-scale disasters, such as earthquakes or typhoons, and the COVID-19 pandemic. For the 2024 Noto Peninsula Earthquake Disaster Relief Operations, JSDF Reserve Personnel and Ready Reserve Personnel qualified as doctors or nurses were dispatched to provide medical support (mobile medical visits) and daily life support (transportation of goods) in the affected areas.

Since the majority of JSDF Reserve Personnel and others are engaged in their respective jobs in peacetime, the understanding and cooperation of their employers are essential for them to participate in training and other official duties. For this purpose, a "special subsidy for companies employing JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel" is provided to employers that implement necessary measures to ensure that JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel can participate in

Commentary

Creating an Organization that Maximizes the Potential of Every Talent (Formulation of the MOD Talent Management Strategy for Defense Officials)

To achieve MOD's organizational goal of "national defense," it is essential to enhance and closely integrate four key components: personnel, budget, equipment, and information. At the core of these four elements are the people who support national defense. In recent years, however, workforce mobility has accelerated in line with socioeconomic trends, making it extremely difficult to recruit and retain talent. Meanwhile, the scale of the budget and equipment has increased significantly, and the volume of information handled has also risen.

In light of this situation, the MOD formulated the "Talent Management Strategy for Defense Officials," recognizing the approximately 20,000 defense officials engaged in policy planning and other duties as vital talent supporting national defense. The Strategy initially focuses on the Internal Bureaus and aims to establish measures and talent management systems that enable each individual to realize professional growth and fully develop their capabilities.

MOVIE: JSDF recruitment channel
URL: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwvH00eFWmfs-FGkRCorzdA

4 Many other countries also have reserve personnel systems.

VOICE

Technical and Engineering Official in a Research Position at the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency's Research Center

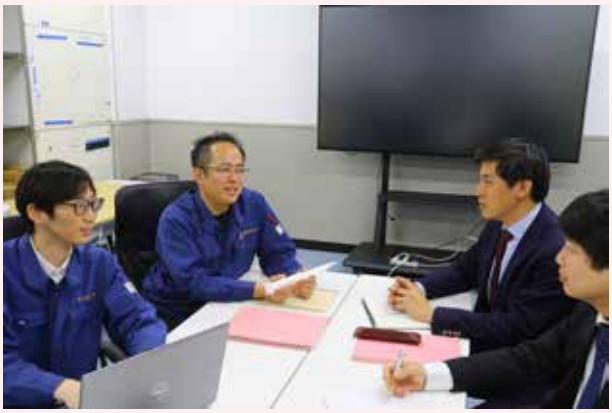
MATSUI Hiroki, Deputy Director (Aircraft), Air Systems Research Center, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA)

Amid an increasingly severe security environment, the use of advanced technologies to achieve superior equipment is becoming more important by the day. At ATLA, many technical and engineering officials in research positions are engaged in research and development (R&D) with the aim of realizing equipment that is one or two steps ahead of other countries'.

Because the R&D of equipment involves mechanical, electrical and electronic, information, chemical, and other fields of engineering, it is essential that experts from diverse technical fields work together. After studying aerospace engineering at university, I chose to work as a technical and engineering official in a research position, where I can most extensively pursue my childhood passion for aircraft development.

I have participated in the development of the P-1 patrol aircraft and the SH-60L rotary-wing aircraft. In addition, drawing on my technical expertise as a technical and engineering official in a research position, I have been involved in administrative duties, such as compiling R&D budgets at the Department of Technology Strategy. Building on these experiences, I currently oversee research projects at the Air Systems Research Center for realizing advanced and strategically important guided missiles, including hypersonic missiles.

Technical and engineering officials in research positions serve as a bridge between companies that design and manufacture equipment and the JSDF that operate them. In order to fulfill my responsibility of realizing technologies and equipment truly necessary for the defense of Japan, both from an engineer's and operator's perspectives, I strive each day not only to stay up to date on technologies but also to have a broad understanding of global military trends.



Discussing the design of a hypersonic missile
(the author is second from left)

training and other activities with peace of mind.

Moreover, in order to secure their understanding and cooperation regarding the duties of JSDF Reserve Personnel and Ready Reserve Personnel, employers of these personnel are provided with a "special subsidy to secure understanding and cooperation from employers regarding the duties of JSDF Reserve Personnel" in the event that JSDF Reserve Personnel or Ready Reserve Personnel respond to a call-up order for defense operations, disaster relief operations, or other operations, or if they have no choice but to leave their regular occupations due to injuries or illness during their duties. In addition, JSDF Reserve Personnel or Ready Reserve Personnel who run their own businesses, such as sole proprietors, are provided with a "special subsidy for ensuring business continuity of JSDF Reserve Personnel" in the event that they respond to a call-up order for defense operations, disaster relief operations, or other operations, or if they have no choice but to leave their regular occupations due to injuries or illnesses during their duties. Additionally, a "special subsidy for companies cooperating with training of JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel" is provided to employers when individuals who, after serving as Candidates for JSDF Reserve Personnel and being appointed as JSDF Reserve Personnel, complete the prescribed education and training and are subsequently appointed as JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel.

Based on the Defense Buildup Program (DBP), the MOD has been reviewing systems for the stable recruitment of JSDF Reserve Personnel and others, including relaxing the age requirements.

In FY2025, in line with the Basic Policy, the MOD decided to increase the allowances[5] provided to JSDF Reserve

5 Allowances provided to JSDF Reserve Personnel and Ready Reserve Personnel were increased from September 1, 2025, and allowances paid to all JSDF Reserve Personnel and others, including the Education and Training Call-up Allowance for Candidates for JSDF Reserve Personnel, were increased from April 1, 2026.

Personnel and Ready Reserve Personnel as part of the treatment improvement measures. In addition, it decided to grant a "continuous service incentive allowance" to JSDF Reserve Personnel who completed one term of service with outstanding performance.[6] Furthermore, in addition to expanding the Higher Education Support Benefits System[7] and promoting the renewal of uniforms, equipment, and related items used by JSDF Reserve Personnel and others, a "special subsidy for ensuring business continuity of JSDF Reserve Personnel" has been established to support JSDF Reserve Personnel or JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel who run their own businesses, such as sole proprietors.

In FY2026, the MOD will increase the allowances paid to JSDF Reserve Personnel and others, as well as steadily proceed with the renewal of uniforms, equipment, and related items used by such personnel. Moreover, in order to establish an environment that enables national and local public employees serving concurrently as JSDF Reserve Personnel and others 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."

See Fig. V-2-2-3 (Overview of the System for JSDF Reserve Personnel and Others)

6 A continuous service incentive allowance of 70,000 yen will be newly granted to JSDF Reserve Personnel, while 215,000 yen (up 95,000 yen) will be granted to JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel.

7 A scheme providing a fixed amount of subsidy to retired fixed-term JSDF personnel who, upon completing their term, enroll in a university or similar institution in Japan and are appointed as JSDF Reserve Personnel during their studies.

Fig. V-2-2-3 Overview of the System for JSDF Reserve Personnel and Others

As of April 1, 2026

	JSDF Reserve Personnel	JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel	Candidate for JSDF Reserve Personnel
Basic concept	● Upon the issuance of a defense call-up order or other orders, serve as JSDF Personnel	● Serve as JSDF Personnel in a pre-designated GSDF unit, as part of the basic framework of defense capability	● Appointed as JSDF Reserve Personnel in the GSDF or MSDF upon completion of education and training
Call-up duty and other duties	● Defense call-up, civil protection call-up, disaster call-up, training call-up	● Defense call-up, civil protection call-up, security call-up, disaster call-up,training call-up	● Education and training call-up
Eligibility	● Former JSDF Personnel, former JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel, former JSDF Reserve Personnel	● Former JSDF Personnel, former JSDF Reserve Personnel	(Common to General and Technical Employment Categories) ● Those with no experience as JSDF personnel (including those with less than a year of JSDF experience)
Age	● Leading privates and lower JSDF Reserve Personnel: 18 to under 55 years old ● Officer, Warrant Officer, NCO: Aged 18 or older and under 62	● Leading privates and lower JSDF Reserve Personnel: 18 to under 50 years old ● Officer, Warrant Officer, NCO: Under the age of three years subtracted from respective retirement age	● General: 18 to under 52 years old; Technical: between the age of 18 and under 53 or 55 depending on technical skills possessed
Employment	● Employed by screening, based on application ● Candidate for JSDF Reserve Personnel is appointed as JSDF Reserve Personnel upon completion of education and training	● Employed by screening, based on application	● General: Employed by examination, based on application ● Technical: Employed by screening, based on application
Rank designation	● Former JSDF Personnel, former JSDF Reserve Personnel and former JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel; Designated rank at the point of retirement in principle ● Enlisted from Candidates for JSDF Reserve Personnel • General: Private • Technical: Designated according to skills and length of experience	● Former JSDF Personnel and former JSDF Reserve Personnel: Designated rank at the point of retirement in principle	● Not designated
Term of service	● Three Years (continuation of appointment is possible) [Maximum age limit for appointment: Under 65 years] * The age limit has been temporarily lifted for the continuation of appointment of certain JSDF Reserve Personnel with specific skills [Common] Medical [GSDF] Maintenance, electricity, construction and radiation management [MSDF] Vessels [ASDF] Language	● Three Years (continuation of appointment is possible [Maximum age limit for appointment: Same as the mandatory retirement age of JSDF personnel]	● General: Within three years ● Technical: Within two years
(Education) Training	● Although the Self-Defense Forces Law designates a maximum of 20 days per year, actual implementation is 5 days per year as a standard	● 30 days per year	● General: 50 days within three years (equivalent to Candidate JSDF personnel (private level) course) ● Technical: 10 days within two years (training to serve as JSDF Personnel by utilizing their special skills)
Promotion	● Promotion is determined by screening the service record of personnel who have fulfilled the service term (actual serving days)	● Promotion is determined by screening the service record of personnel who have fulfilled the service term (actual serving days)	● Since there is no designated rank, there is no promotion
Benefits, allowances, and other terms	● Training Call-up Allowance: 11,600 yen/day ● JSDF Reserve Allowance: 13,100 yen/month ● Continuous Service Incentive Allowance: 70,000 yen/term * The Training Call-up Allowance of 13,900 yen/day supports the training of JSDF Reserve Personnel who are former candidates for JSDF Reserve Personnel in order for them to become JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel.	● Training Call-up Allowance: 18,200-27,200 yen/day ● JSDF Ready Reserve Allowance: 19,700 yen/month ● Continuous Service Incentive Allowance: 215,000 yen/one term	● Education and Training Call-up Allowance: 9,300 yen/day
Special subsidy for companies employing JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel	● Special subsidy for companies cooperating with training of JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel: 560,000 yen/personnel * Provided when an JSDF Reserve Personnel who is a former candidate for JSDF Reserve Personnel is appointed as an JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel.	● Special subsidy for companies employing JSDF Ready Reserve Personnel: 42,500 yen/month	–
	● Special subsidy to secure understanding and cooperation from employers regarding the duties of JSDF Reserve Personnel: 34,000 yen/day		
Special subsidy for JSDF Reserve Personnel, etc. who run businesses	● Special Subsidy for Ensuring Business Continuity of JSDF Reserve Personnel: 34,000 yen/day		

REFERENCE: Overview of systems related to JSDF Reserve Personnel and others
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/gsdf/reserve/

VOICE

Voice of JSDF Reserve Personnel Playing an Active Role in Society

HANADA Hitoshi, Reserve Warrant Officer (GSDF) and Environmental Health Leader, Intensive Care Home for the Elderly Ryokushoen, Social Welfare Corporation Ryokufukai

I have been working at Social Welfare Corporation Ryokufukai after retiring from the JSDF at retirement age in January 2019.

My duties include transporting residents of an elderly care facility, repairing malfunctions inside and outside the facility, maintaining the flowers and greenery, and managing and inspecting disaster prevention equipment.

Even after eight years in this job, there are still things to learn every day.

Thanks to the understanding of my workplace and the support of those around me, I am able to participate in JSDF Reserve Personnel call-up trainings. I am truly grateful for their understanding and support.

During training, my former colleagues and I reminisce over shared memories. The training is demanding yet highly fulfilling.

As JSDF Reserve Personnel, I will continue working hard here, driven to contribute to the noble mission of national defense by applying what I learned through training, along with the experience I gained with the JSDF.



Reserve Warrant Officer (GSDF) Hanada making an active contribution by drawing on his JSDF experience

VOICE

Voice of the Employer of JSDF Reserve Personnel

NARITA Kazuhiro, President, Social Welfare Corporation Ryokufukai, Aomori Prefecture

Based in Hirakawa City, Aomori Prefecture, Ryokufukai provides a range of senior care services, including intensive care homes for the elderly, home-visit care, and adult day services.

We support each individual by respecting their dignity, value our ties with the community, and contribute to creating areas where people can live with peace of mind.

From the perspectives of enhancing local disaster preparedness and promoting a diverse workforce, we currently employ four JSDF Reserve Personnel including Mr. Hanada. Possessing discipline, crisis-response capabilities, and a strong sense of responsibility, JSDF Reserve Personnel perform important duties in the social welfare sector as well, from caregiving to safety management within and outside our facilities. In times of disaster, they are also dependable professionals who help to protect local residents.

In our continued quest to support the JSDF Reserve Personnel through organization-wide efforts, we will assign these JSDF Reserve Personnel to duties that harness their skills, promote understanding of their participation in training, establish workplace support systems, improve personnel treatment, and offer consultation services.



Mr. NARITA Kazuhiro

VOICE

Voice of JSDF Reserve Personnel Who Participated in a Specialized Call-up Training

SETOGUCHI Junichiro, Reserve Master Sergeant (GSDF) and Environmental Health Leader, JSDF Kumamoto Provincial Cooperation Office

I served on the Western Aircraft Control and Warning Wing of the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) for five years until 1988. When I retired, I volunteered to become JSDF Reserve Personnel. I participated in the call-up training each year as a member of the ASDF Reserve Personnel from 1989 to 2005, as a member of the GSDF Ready Reserve Personnel from 2005 to 2017 and as a member of the GSDF Reserve Personnel since 2017.

In addition to the five-day training, JSDF Reserve Personnel can gain further experience by participating in exercises, such as JSDF exercises and the Japan-U.S. bilateral command post exercise (YS). I took part in the FY2025 JSDF Joint Exercise (07JX).

During this exercise, I trained in handling various types of equipment at a medical base, setting up medical tents, and coordinating with medical units.

This was my first time participating in training at a medical base, and I was made keenly aware of the importance of continuous training to ensure that we can respond promptly if such a situation actually arises.

In particular, during the exercise, there were many instances requiring the handling of necessary equipment and materials, and I strongly felt that without regular familiarity, it would be difficult to act when it counts.

I hope to continue participating in such specialized call-up training to enhance my skills and proficiency.



Reserve Master Sergeant (GSDF) Setoguchi

3 Improvement of Treatment and Other Initiatives for JSDF Personnel

In line with the Basic Policy, amid the increasingly severe security environment surrounding Japan, to duly recognize the special nature of the JSDF duties and working environment, and to continue securing highly qualified personnel, allowances for those engaged in particularly specialized duties will be enhanced. In FY2025, new allowances were introduced[8] for JSDF personnel performing air traffic control operations, for aircraft maintenance technician responding to scrambling against airspace incursion, and for personnel engaged in major field exercises and similar operations. Furthermore, flying allowances for aircrew and disaster dispatch allowances were increased,[9] while special operations personnel allowances[10] were also newly granted for personnel in each JSDF service's cyber unit.

Notably, since recruitment of "shi" (E1-E3 level) personnel has become particularly stringent and is an urgent issue, a new benefit (Designated Place Living Adjustment Allowance) was established. It was decided that a total of 1,200,000 yen would be provided over the six years following enlistment to JSDF personnel, regardless of fixed-term or indefinite-term status, who reside together under special living conditions, such as in barracks, to maintain immediate readiness.

The JSDF personnel salary schedule was established

8 Allowances for JSDF personnel performing air traffic control operations will, for example, amount to approximately 32,000 yen per month for the rank of Ichii (Captain (GSDF, ASDF)/Lieutenant (MSDF)), while allowances for aircraft maintenance personnel responding to scrambling against airspace incursion will amount to 1,200 yen per day. Allowances for personnel engaged in major field exercises and similar operations will be 1,400 yen per day.

9 The aviation allowances for aircrew will, for example, amount to approximately 289,000 yen per month, while the disaster relief operation allowances will amount to 2,160 yen per day, for fighter pilots at the rank of Ichii.

10 The special operations personnel allowances for personnel of each JSDF service's cyber-specialized units at the rank of Ichii will, for example, amount to approximately 32,000 yen per month.

with the formation of the National Police Reserve in 1950, based on the Public Security Service Salary Schedule (I),[11] originally applied to primarily police officers, with the addition of approximately 10% equivalent to overtime allowances. This salary schedule has remained largely unreviewed for approximately 70 years since the establishment of the JSDF. To ensure that salaries reflect the special nature of JSDF personnel's duties, working environment, and the constraints and burdens imposed on them, surveys on actual overtime practices of JSDF personnel and on the salary systems of military personnel in other countries have been conducted in line with the DBP. Based on the findings of the 2024 working conditions survey and the opinions of external experts to ensure fairness and impartiality, the new "Personnel Treatment and Salary Subcommittee" was established within the Defense Personnel Review Board and is reviewing the appropriate standards of the salary schedule and the mechanism for calculating monthly salaries. Based on the instruction of the Prime Minister, the review is making steady progress toward realizing the independent revision of the JSDF personnel compensation structure in FY2027, which will mark the first such revision in approximately 70 years since the establishment of the JSDF.

At the same time, to ensure that JSDF personnel can execute their missions with high morale and pride, measures related to honors and privileges, including the appropriate commendation of achievements, will be promoted.

4 Improvement of Living and Working Environments

The NDS calls for the continued improvement of the living and working environments to enable all JSDF personnel to demonstrate their own abilities while maintaining high morale and pride. Likewise, the Basic Policy states that, to enhance performance across the JSDF, it is essential to create an environment that improves both job satisfaction and ease of working, where each JSDF personnel member feels a sense of purpose in their work.

Thus, the JSDF will confront these societal changes head-on and establish living and working environments aligned with the lifestyles of younger generations. Specifically, while ensuring that interpersonal bonds remain strong among personnel and maintaining opportunities for them to acquire basic collective-action skills, efforts are being made to expedite, in a planned manner, the introduction of individual space for each personnel, creating privacy-conscious living environments even within the barracks.



A barrack room transformed into a comfortable space with enhanced privacy

In addition, meticulous maintenance work including necessary refurbishments and repairs—taking into account JSDF personnel needs—will continue to improve living and working environments in office buildings, barracks, and other facilities. Moreover, since JSDF personnel maintain various states of readiness for emergency response, etc., appropriate readiness protocols will be examined for necessary arrangements. For vessel crew members, the living and working environments will be improved through measures such as enhancing the appeal of living quarters on new types of vessels and expanding their standby areas. To enable JSDF personnel to fully demonstrate their capabilities and carry out their missions with high morale, it is also crucial to improve the living environments of personnel and their families. Therefore, efforts to renovate aging housing have been made continuously and must be continued in the future. To this end, renovations of existing housing and Private Finance Initiative (PFI)-based rebuilding will be expedited in a planned manner. In parallel, initiatives will be pursued to upgrade housing facilities in line with recent residential trends and to balance living convenience with readiness. Given that communication environment is an indispensable infrastructure of modern society, the JSDF will enhance its communication environment to ensure quality of life for each personnel. By FY2026, wireless LAN access points will be installed in at least one common area of welfare facilities and barracks at JSDF camps and bases nationwide.

Furthermore, a communication environment will be

REFERENCE: Improvement of Treatment for JSDF Personnel
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/gsdf/jieikanbosyu/treatment/index.html

11 Applicable to national public employees who are police officers, Imperial Guard officers, immigration control officers and personnel serving in prisons and similar institutions.

established on major vessels by FY2027 through the use of commercial low-Earth-orbit satellite networks[12] that complement operational communications, enabling crew members to contact their families and access the Internet onboard. On the other hand, certain JSDF bases and camps are located in remote areas with limited public transportation and inadequate daily amenities. Thus, external resources will be leveraged to expand bus services to the nearest stations and implement car-sharing services, thereby improving living convenience.[13]

Moreover, routinely worn clothing items, such as uniforms and workwear, will be properly maintained and renewed, with allotments increased and specifications enhanced based on actual usage. With respect to food provisions, efforts will be made to promote health management in accordance with the nutritional intake standards required for personnel activities, and continuously enhance their appeal. In addition, the actual conditions at bases across Japan will be assessed, and costs arising from price increases will also be appropriately reflected. The health management systems will continue to be reinforced through foundational initiatives, such as expanded medical checkups and the procurement of training equipment. In parallel, new consideration will be given to acquiring devices to monitor each personnel member's health status during education and training.

VOICE

On Entering the United States Naval Academy and Completing the Indoctrination Program

Overview of the Program

Since FY2025, the undergraduate curriculum of the National Defense Academy (NDA) offers a program for students to study at U.S. military academies for four years. The program is designed to develop internationally minded perspectives required of future JSDF officers, alongside building strong personal networks between NDA students and U.S. officer candidates. Participants are selected from first-year NDA students through a competitive process that includes academic, English proficiency, and physical fitness tests, as well as interviews. Those selected begin their overseas studies around June after advancing to their second year at NDA.

Voice of a Dispatched Student

(TOKUDA Ryo, inaugural class, U.S. Military Academy Study Program)

After entering the United States Naval Academy (USNA), students participate in a seven-week indoctrination program, which includes physical training from 5:00 a.m. every morning and memorizing an entire book verbatim. I was particularly struck by the fifth law of the Navy: "On the strength of one link in the cable, dependeth the might of the chain. Who knows when thou mayest be tested? So live that thou bearest the strain!" This link extends beyond classmates. Instructors told us, "Both President Carter and Fleet Admiral Nimitz walked the same path, and so will those who serve under you in the future." Feeling heartened by these words of encouragement, we were able to complete the indoctrination program.

I am now a member of the Marksmanship Training Unit, to which only four students are selected each year from a class of approximately 1,200, where I receive shooting and physical training. I feel great pride and responsibility each day in being able to represent both Japan's NDA and USNA as the first four-year international student from NDA since its establishment. I will work harder aiming to contribute to strengthening the bonds between Japan and the United States.



Physical training (the author is third from left)

12 Broadband Internet service utilizing low Earth orbit satellites. Interconnecting network links through numerous low-altitude satellites enables high-speed, low-latency communications.

13 By FY2024, Hyakuri Air Base, Nyutabaru Air Base, and Hofu Minami Air Base contracted with external service providers to transport personnel from each base to the nearest railway station by bus. In FY2025, bus transportation services were also launched at Komatsu Air Base. Among JSDF camps and bases nationwide, car-sharing services have been introduced at 50 locations as of FY2025, taking into account personnel needs.

5 Human Resources Development

Based on the DBP, 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 curriculum education and utilization of state-of-the-art technologies. Additionally, in order to cultivate and produce personnel possessing foreign language proficiency, networks with officer candidates from other countries, and understanding of foreign defense policies, 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. Beginning in FY2025, it has sent students to the U.S. service academies.

Furthermore, education requires considerable human, time, and economic commitment, including securing instructors with special skills as well as improving equipment and educational facilities. In the event that personnel need to further improve their professional knowledge and skills, or that it is difficult for them to acquire such knowledge and skills within the JSDF, the MOD/JSDF commissions education to external institutions, including those abroad, as well as domestic companies and research institutes.

6 Initiatives for Retirement and Re-employment

(1) Raising of Mandatory Retirement Age

To adapt to increasingly sophisticated equipment, diversified missions, and internationalization, it is important to more effectively utilize personnel who possess extensive knowledge, skills, and experience. Accordingly, between 2020 and 2024, the mandatory retirement ages for JSDF personnel holding ranks from Issa (Colonel (GSDF, ASDF)/Captain (MSDF)) through Sanso (Sergeant (GSDF)/Staff Sergeant (ASDF)/Petty Officer 3rd Class (MSDF)) were each extended by two years. In line with the Basic Policy and with a view to effectively utilizing personnel's accumulated knowledge, skills, and experience and establishing their lifetime career plans, it was decided to raise the mandatory retirement ages for JSDF personnel holding ranks from Sho (General/Lieutenant General (GSDF, ASDF)/Admiral/Vice Admiral (MSDF)), to Sanso by two years each between 2028 and 2032, while balancing extended healthy longevity with the maintenance of their strength. Furthermore, the categories of personnel subject to the mandatory retirement age of 60 have been expanded to include nurses (commissioned officers), JSDF personnel assigned to space fields, and JSDF personnel engaged in cyber-related duties. It was decided to raise their mandatory retirement age incrementally by one year every two years from 2028 to age 60.

Fig. V-2-2-4 Rank and Retirement Age of JSDF Personnel

Rank Designation	abbrev.	Retirement Age
General/Lieutenant General (GSDF), Admiral/Vice Admiral (MSDF), General/Lieutenant General (ASDF)	Sho	60
Major General (GSDF), Rear Admiral (MSDF), Major General (ASDF)	Shoho	
Colonel (GSDF), Captain (MSDF), Colonel (ASDF)	Issa	58
Lieutenant Colonel (GSDF), Commander (MSDF), Lieutenant Colonel (ASDF)	Nisa	57
Major (GSDF), Lieutenant Commander (MSDF), Major (ASDF)	Sansa	
Captain (GSDF), Lieutenant (MSDF), Captain (ASDF)	Ichii	56
First Lieutenant (GSDF), Lieutenant Junior Grade (MSDF), First Lieutenant (ASDF)	Nii	
Second Lieutenant (GSDF), Ensign (MSDF), Second Lieutenant (ASDF)	Sani	
Warrant Officer (GSDF), Warrant Officer (MSDF), Warrant Officer (ASDF)	Juni	
Sergeant Major (GSDF), Chief Petty Officer (MSDF), Senior Master Sergeant (ASDF)	Socho	
Master Sergeant (GSDF), Petty Officer First Class (MSDF), Master Sergeant (ASDF)	Isso	
Sergeant First Class (GSDF), Petty Officer Second Class (MSDF), Technical Sergeant (ASDF)	Niso	55
Sergeant (GSDF), Petty Officer Third Class (MSDF), Staff Sergeant (ASDF)	Sanso	
Leading Private (GSDF), Leading Seaman (MSDF), Airman First Class (ASDF)	Shicho	—
Private First Class (GSDF), Seaman (MSDF), Airman Second Class (ASDF)	Isshi	
Private (GSDF), Seaman Apprentice (MSDF), Airman Third Class (ASDF)	Nishi	

(Notes)1 The mandatory retirement age for JSDF personnel who hold the rank of General or Admiral and serve as Chief of Staff of Joint Staff Office, Chief of Staff GSDF, Chief of Staff MSDF, Chief of Staff ASDF, or Commander of the JSDF Joint Operations Command (JJOC), is 62.
2 The mandatory age of retirement for JSDF personnel who hold positions such as physician, dentist, pharmacist, musician, military police officer, or information analyst, is 60.
3 The mandatory retirement age for JSDF personnel is scheduled to be raised by two years for all ranks over the five-year period from FY2028 through FY2032.

See Fig. V-2-2-4 (Rank and Retirement Age of JSDF Personnel)

(2) Reappointment

The MOD/JSDF will further promote reappointments, under which retired JSDF personnel are rehired as JSDF personnel on fixed-term contracts after mandatory retirement until reaching the age of 65. Thus far, the scope of duties available to reappointed JSDF personnel has been expanded to include auxiliary vessel crew operations and aircraft pilotage tasks, cyberspace and flight inspection tasks, and space-domain awareness tasks. In April 2026, the scope was further expanded to include duties related to aircraft-based surveys and research and development. Moreover, measures are being implemented to secure reappointments of retired JSDF personnel. In FY2025, reappointment eligibility was extended

VOICE

Using the Reappointment System for Former JSDF Personnel

KOMINAMIDATE Chieri, Sergeant (GSDF), Obihiro Transport Signal NCO, 5th Signal Unit

I retired from the JSDF in 2015 when I got married. I then had three children, and my life became centered around raising my children. When I later reached a new stage in life, I decided to return to the JSDF by taking advantage of the reappointment system for former JSDF personnel. After leaving nearly ten years ago, I am working with the JSDF again while raising young children. Thanks to the understanding and support of those around me, I have been able to balance family and work life using the early/late shift hour system and taking my children to and from school in collaboration with my husband.

I am deeply grateful for the understanding of my family and the support of my unit, without which I would not have been able to raise children and work.



The author balances work and family life

to those who have once left JSDF service after reaching the mandatory retirement age.

With respect to 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, the former JSDF personnel reappointment system was used to employ 170 former JSDF personnel in FY2025, including approximately 100 personnel within the GSDF. Although employment requirements, such as age limits and prior service experience, vary according to the rank held at the time of retirement or separation from the JSDF, the number of reappointed personnel has shown an upward trend each year since FY2017. Accordingly, the MOD/JSDF will continue making broad use of this system in order to further employ reappointed personnel.

(3) Re-employment

In order to maintain the JSDF's strength, most uniformed JSDF personnel retire after their mid-50s, while fixed-term uniformed JSDF personnel retire in their 20s to mid-30s. For many of them, re-employment is essential to safeguard their livelihood. It is of paramount importance to provide re-employment support for active uniformed JSDF personnel in order to relieve their anxiety about the future and allow them to devote themselves to their duties, as well as to recruit and retain uniformed JSDF personnel.

The DBP also affirms that securing the post-retirement livelihood of JSDF personnel is a national obligation. Under the Basic Policy, the MOD will cooperate with relevant ministries and agencies to expand re-employment opportunities and enhance vocational training opportunities and strengthen outreach for re-employment, thereby further enriching and reinforcing re-employment support.

To ensure that uniformed JSDF personnel who retire at an early age can continue working in society with peace of mind until reaching the pension eligibility age of 65, the MOD aims to establish a system in FY2026 in which re-employment support will be provided through the age of 65. In order to compensate for the economic disadvantages borne by JSDF personnel as a result of the early retirement system and to ensure their stable post-retirement life, revisions were made to the system for Compensation for Retirees under Young-Age Retirement, which entered into force in FY2026. Based on the final recommendations of the "Personal Treatment and Salary Subcommittee" within the Defense Personnel Review Board, the overall system was enhanced from the perspective of appropriately recognizing the personnel's contributions following re-employment and their individual initiative, while ensuring that the system does not discourage willingness to work.

Specifically, the following four revisions were made:

- ○ Compensation levels will be raised in stages, and from FY2026 through FY2028, they will improve to levels comparable to salary levels at the time of retirement.
- ○ Compensation eligibility requirements were revised to use

cumulative years of service as the standard beginning in FY2026, enabling appropriate evaluation of diverse work arrangements and service following reappointment.

○ To ensure that increases in income earned through re-employment would not directly result in reductions to compensation payments, payment restrictions will be eased beginning in FY2028, so as not to discourage willingness to work.

○ To reflect re-employment income more accurately, payment procedures will be modified beginning in FY2028.

Through these revisions, the system will contribute to establishing life plans following early retirement, maintaining and raising morale among active-duty JSDF personnel, and securing future applicants for the JSDF.

a. Expanding re-employment opportunities

Retired uniformed JSDF personnel have excellent abilities in planning, leadership, faculty, cooperativeness, and responsibility gained through their work performance, education and training. Furthermore, they have various qualifications and licenses acquired through their duties and vocational training. Therefore, they are making positive contributions in a broad range of sectors, including manufacturing and service industries, as well as finance, insurance, real estate, and construction industries, in addition to the areas of disaster prevention and crisis management at local governments. Specifically, as of the end of March 2026, a total of 692 retired JSDF personnel work as crisis management officers and others at the disaster prevention and crisis management departments of local governments: 47 prefectural bureaus have 117 of them in total, and 494 municipal bureaus have 575 all over Japan.

As re-employment at local governments' disaster prevention and crisis management departments will strengthen cooperation between the MOD/JSDF and these governments and enhance their crisis management capabilities, in March 2025, the Cabinet Office, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency, and the MOD jointly urged prefectural governors and municipal mayors to further engage retired JSDF personnel while also reinforcing other re-employment support. At the same time, the expansion of special local allocation tax measures covering expenses required for the recruitment and placement of regional disaster prevention managers[14] is planned in FY2026, in order to make it easier for local governments to employ disaster prevention and crisis management specialists, including retired JSDF personnel, which will promote the further employment of retired JSDF personnel.

In addition, in the public sector, in March 2025 the Fire and Disaster Management Agency and the MOD agreed to bolster cooperation in securing personnel for fire departments (auto technicians, marine technicians, etc.) and for firefighting equipment-related companies, and on facilitating re-employment support for retired JSDF personnel. The MOD also works with the Japan Coast Guard (four occupational categories, e.g., aircraft personnel) and with Regional Administrative Evaluation Bureaus and other organizations, including jointly holding recruitment information sessions for retiring JSDF personnel for the first time.

Moreover, as part of efforts to strengthen cooperation with industries, by November 2025 the MOD and the National Police Agency, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism issued agreements and written requests for cooperation on securing personnel in their respective industries and providing smooth re-employment support for retired JSDF personnel.

b. Enhancing vocational training opportunities and strengthening outreach for re-employment

In order to enhance vocational training for retired JSDF personnel seeking re-employment, the MOD/JSDF has decided to collaborate with relevant ministries and agencies in adding new vocational training programs, including training for obtaining qualifications useful for re-employment in industries, as well as instructional programs offered by universities, vocational schools, and other institutions. In addition, the scope of personnel eligible to receive disaster prevention and crisis management education has been expanded.

Additionally, in order to enable retired JSDF personnel to more readily obtain public qualifications by utilizing the skills they gained during their service, the MOD/JSDF, in cooperation with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, simplified the procedures for acquiring qualifications for marine technician and aircraft mechanic, and implemented other measures, including partial exemptions from required courses and the shortening of training periods necessary for qualification.

Moreover, as part of efforts to strengthen outreach related to re-employment, videos introducing the career paths of JSDF personnel were created to increase their employers. Furthermore, to enhance convenience for retiring JSDF personnel and give them access to a wider range of job listings, measures are being undertaken, including introducing the Employment Support Information Network System to the JSDF Personnel Support Association, which facilitates matching between retiring JSDF personnel and private-sector employers.

14 A system that certifies external human resources specialized in disaster prevention as possessing necessary knowledge and experience for appointment as "disaster prevention officers" and "crisis management officers" in local governments.

See Fig. V-2-2-5 (Major Occupational Training Provided to Support Re-employment); Fig. V-2-2-6 (Re-employment Support in FY2025)

Fig. V-2-2-5 Major Occupational Training Provided to Support Re-employment

Re-employment support for uniformed JSDF personnel serving under the fixed-term service system

Career guidance → Occupational aptitude testing → Occupational training → Joint job fair for uniformed JSDF personnel serving under the fixed-term service system → Support for application, job interview, etc. → Re-employment

Re-employment support for uniformed JSDF personnel retiring at an early age

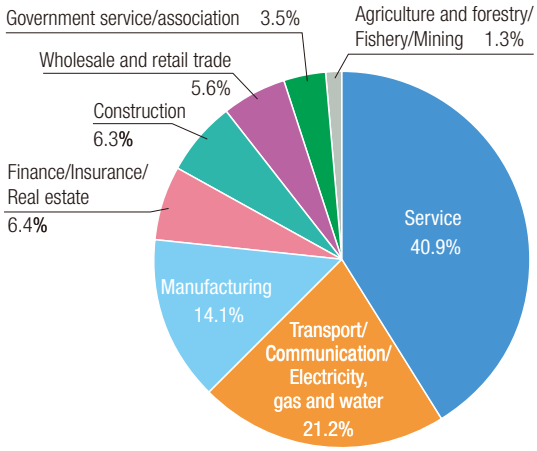
Business management training → Occupational aptitude testing → Occupational training → Employment placement → Support for application, job interview, etc. → Re-employment

Major Occupational Training Provided to Support Re-employment (Accomplishment in FY2024)

Category	Training topics
Vehicle operation	● Large-sized vehicles ● Regular-sized vehicles ● Special (large-sized) ● Semi-medium-sized ● Tractors
Operation of construction and transport machineries and other installations	● Forklifts and shovel loaders ● Boiler engineer ● Heavy-duty vehicle ● Crane
Telecommunication technology	● Electrician ● Licensed electrician ● Installation technician for telecommunication facilities
Handling of dangerous materials	● Hazardous material engineer ● Person responsible for class 3 refrigerating machinery ● Person responsible for manufacturing safety of high pressure gas
Labor management practice, etc.	● Drone operator ● Security guard certification examination ● Operation manager ● Labor and social security attorney ● Customer service business etiquette certification ● Comprehensive crisis management seminar ● Career consultant ● Marine technician (Grades 3 to 6)
Information processing technique	● Microsoft office specialist ● IT passport ● Fundamental (applied) information technology engineer ● Office automation equipment
Social welfare	● First-level training for nursing care workers ● Mental health management ● Care fitter ● Certified caregiver
Medical affairs	● Medical affairs ● Pharmacy insurance claims administration ● Pharmacy administration ● Registered vendor
Legal practice, etc.	● Real estate transaction specialist ● Administrative scrivener ● Certified professional secretary examination ● Judicial scrivener
Other job categories	● Disaster prevention and crisis management education ● Financial planner ● Fire defense equipment officer ● Official Business Skill Test in Book-keeping ● Health officer ● Food and nutrition education seminar ● Preparatory course for civil service examination ● Condominium manager ●TOEIC ● DIY consultant ● EIKEN test in practical English proficiency ● Automobile mechanic ● Welding technician (Gas/arc welding, etc.) ● Fire prevention manager

(Note) The names of the occupational training topics for each category are listed in descending order of the number of participants.

Fig. V-2-2-6 Re-employment Support in FY2025



*Due to rounding, the percentages for each category do not add up to 100%.

Termination of a term
Result of re-employment support for retired personnel

Number of personnel who applied for re-employment support	730
Number of personnel who found a job	727
Percentage of personnel who found a job	99.6%

Early age retirement
Result of re-employment support for retired personnel

Number of personnel who applied for re-employment support	4,062
Number of personnel who found a job	4,027
Percentage of personnel who found a job	99.1%

VOICE

Voices of Re-employed Personnel and the Employer: Retired Fixed-Term JSDF Personnel

Ms. TANIGAWA Ayane, Special Equipment Fabrication Department, Special Equipment Production Division, Ishikawa Seisakusho, Ltd.

I retired from the Ground Self-Defense Force upon the termination of my term in March 2025 and joined Ishikawa Seisakusho, Ltd.

I am currently assigned to a workplace that conducts component machining. Based on the production schedule, I manage the progress and coordinate across departments to ensure that their respective responsibilities, including painting, welding, and assembly, proceed without delays. When the process proceeds as planned and products are completed, I feel a great sense of relief.

The habits I developed in the JSDF, such as leading a disciplined lifestyle, feeling a sense of responsibility to accomplish assigned missions, and working as a team, directly support my current job. In addition, my ability to accurately assess situations and promptly report, communicate, and consult, as well as my safety awareness and intuition to care for machinery, which I acquired through training, have been highly useful in the manufacturing industry.

Without losing sight of my original aspirations, I will continue to approach each task with sincerity and strive for improvement.



Ms. TANIGAWA Ayane

Mr. BAN Yoshinori, General Manager, General Affairs Division, Ishikawa Seisakusho, Ltd.

Headquartered in Hakusan City, Ishikawa Prefecture, Ishikawa Seisakusho is a machinery manufacturer founded in 1921 that develops and produces industrial machinery, such as paper-processing and textile machinery, and defense equipment. We began producing defense equipment in 1937 for the former Imperial Japanese Navy, and production continues to the present day following a temporary suspension after World War II. In this way, we have contributed to Japan's defense capabilities through supplying equipment to the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces.

Across various departments within the company, approximately 20 former JSDF personnel, including Ms. Tanigawa, play important roles by leveraging their individual strengths and expertise, while demonstrating the communication skills, discipline, perseverance, and sense of responsibility they developed during their service. We will continue to create an environment where former JSDF personnel can thrive, and remain committed to being a company that contributes to the fulfillment of the JSDF's mission.



Mr. BAN Yoshinori

VOICE

Voices of Re-employed Personnel and the Employer: JSDF Personnel Who Retired at an Early Age

Mr. TARU Kenichi, Component Maintenance Department 1, ANA Component Technics Co., Ltd.

In November 2025, I retired from the Maritime Self-Defense Force upon reaching retirement age, and in the same month, I was hired by ANA Component Technics Co., Ltd.

I served as aircrew at the JSDF, so I was interested in companies where I could apply this knowledge after retirement. I was drawn to ANA Component Technics because its business is related to onboard electronic equipment, similar to my previous career, and also because I was impressed by the excellent service I received on an ANA flight during my return from an overseas assignment.

While I had some concerns about joining, the company has shown respect for the experience, knowledge, and technical skills I acquired in the JSDF. I am working in a workplace that is uplifting and warm-hearted, as enshrined in ANA's Way.

I remain committed to supporting aviation safety by applying the experience and airmanship I developed at the JSDF.



Mr. TARU Kenichi

Mr. OI Satoshi, Vice President, Component Maintenance 1, ANA Component Technics Co., Ltd.

Our company has three business pillars: maintenance of ANA Group's aircraft components, production of in-flight entertainment, and calibration of measuring instruments. We aim to contribute to improving the quality of aircraft equipment and operations across ANA Group airlines, and provide customers with peace of mind, safety, and a comfortable cabin environment.

The discipline, self-management skills, adaptability to organizations, and teamwork skills that JSDF personnel cultivated through their service offer significant strengths in the private sector. Mr. Taru, in particular, applies the expertise and experience he gained at the JSDF to maintenance of aircraft components and calibration of instruments, and plays an indispensable role in maintaining and improving quality in his assigned workplace.



Mr. OI Satoshi

REFERENCE: Re-employment support (assistance) by the MOD
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/profile/reemploy/index.html

REFERENCE: Retired JSDF personnel employment guide (GSDF)
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/gsdf/retire/index.html

Movie: Introduction to JSDF personnel career paths
URL: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1LEgzQHG9LyH6UHox1U1T4zf89UKJtGo&si=NbS1Sn16NySQ6nQL

VOICE

Voices of Re-employed Personnel and the Employer: Retired Fixed-Term JSDF Personnel

Mr. IWAKI Keisuke, Planning Department, General Affairs Division, ANA New Chitose Airport Co., Ltd.

I joined ANA New Chitose Airport Co., Ltd. after serving two terms in the 18th AC&W Group Guard Team of the Air Self-Defense Force, where I performed warning and surveillance duties using ground-based radar.

At present, I am responsible for workforce planning, which forms the backbone of airport operations, as well as promoting digital transformation aimed at improving operational efficiency. When I first joined, I felt some uncertainty due to declining air travel demand caused by COVID-19 and the differences between the JSDF and the private sector. However, many former JSDF personnel are at the company, and with the support of senior colleagues I could consult, I was able to quickly adapt to the workplace. Even if the focus has changed from protecting the nation to safeguarding our customers' journeys, my commitment to placing safety first remains the same.

Drawing on the teamwork and communication skills I developed in the JSDF, I hope to continue challenging myself to various endeavors.



Mr. IWAKI Keisuke

Ms. HIRATSUKA Shiori, Manager, ANA New Chitose Airport Co., Ltd.

We are based at New Chitose Airport, the vast aerial gateway to Hokkaido, and support air transportation services as part of the ANA Group. We actively recruit former JSDF personnel, and many are currently working at the company. While the skills and technical expertise required in the JSDF and the aviation industry may differ, safety and teamwork are essential to both. Whether it is ensuring safety—the foundation of our business—or day-to-day operations, they cannot be accomplished by any single person. We feel that Mr. Iwaki consistently demonstrates the ability to apply the teamwork and communication skills he cultivated in the JSDF. We expect that he will continue to succeed with his flexibility and willingness to take on new challenges without hesitation.



Ms. HIRATSUKA Shiori

MOVIE: The GSDF is a rich reservoir of talent – Ready to meet your HR needs! (GSDF)
URL: https://youtu.be/Qaz9KwOeX2U?si=EAOTGgKJed7CXLXb

MOVIE: The forces that protected our seas now support society: Former Maritime Self-Defense Force personnel embark on a new future (MSDF)
URL: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLhD6Y9WpnWDO6BcHkuFAPVjygQTkHZDW-

REFERENCE: Retired JSDF personnel recruitment guidance (MSDF)
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/msdf/recruit/engo/

Movie: Air Self-Defense Force career paths
URL: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJ9-iK4s7XjIMpa3SNtT-V_w7cDxzP48X&si=RO535VEObWqDm7Aw

3 Recruiting the Cyber Workforce

1 Background and Objectives of the Cyber Workforce Comprehensive Strategy

The Defense Buildup Program states that the establishment of posture, even under cyberattacks, to secure the JSDF's command and control capabilities as well as its high-priority equipment systems, ensure JSDF's mission accomplishment, and build a framework to support the cyber defense of the defense industry. Accordingly, by around FY2027, cyber units such as the JSDF Cyber Defense Command will be expanded to approximately 4,000 personnel. Besides, by providing an education to those engaged in cyber-related duties such as system procurement, maintenance, and operation, the total number of cyber workforce within the MOD/JSDF is planned to reach about 20,000.

Amid this situation, the environment surrounding the recruitment and retention of MOD/JSDF personnel has grown increasingly severe every year, while at the same time the importance of cyber workforce has been rising across society.

To this end, the MOD/JSDF will (1) ensure consistency within its policy for securing and developing its workforce and promote consideration of measures for workforce and cross-organizational cooperation related to human resources, and (2) clarify the ideas of the MOD/JSDF regarding cyber workforce and approaching those who aspire to join the MOD/JSDF and external cyber workforce while developing and deepening cooperative relationships with external entities. For these purposes, in July 2024, the MOD/JSDF consolidated the basic review directions into a strategy and published the "JMOD Cyber Workforce Comprehensive Strategy."

See Reference 84 (The MOD Cyber Workforce Comprehensive Strategy)

2 The MOD/JSDF's Duties and Cyber Workforce

In order to respond to the increasingly organized, sophisticated, and complex nature of contemporary cyber attackers, in the JSDF's cyber units, commissioned officers (COs), non-commissioned officers (NCOs), administrative officials (AOs), technical officials (TOs), and others play their respective roles and carry out missions as a team.

In addition, the JSDF cyber workforce must understand not only cyber domains, but also a certain level of operations of various assets, such as tanks, vessels, and fighter aircraft, that are connected through cyberspace.

3 Direction of Initiatives Related to the Cyber Workforce

In order to secure an excellent cyber workforce for the MOD/JSDF, the organizations must recruit and train a wide range of human resources, including those who are interested in MOD/JSDF cyber operations and those with extensive cyber expertise. To this end, efforts will be guided by five pillars: (1) accurate "identification" of the skills and capabilities required of a cyber workforce, (2) appropriate "recruitment" for cyber workforce, (3) appropriate "development," (4) "retention" of a workforce, and (5) "unification" of the entire HR measures. Under these pillars, the following initiatives will advance the recruitment of human resources.

(1) Initiatives for Securing the Cyber Workforce

In order to further enhance the expertise of those who aspire to work in the cyber field, the MOD/JSDF will establish a career path to continuously engage in cyber-related work from the beginning of service. In addition, those who already have specialized expertise, qualifications, and work experience related to the cyber will be hired as specific fixed-term JSDF personnel, mid-career COs, or technical sergeants and will be flexibly appointed to jobs and posts where they can make use of their experience. Furthermore, the MOD/JSDF will reinforce recruitment by reaching out to an external cyber workforce while making it easier for people to imagine working at the MOD. To this end, the MOD/JSDF will establish career paths tailored to the characteristics of COs, NCOs, AOs, TOs, and others and increase the visibility of career paths of personnel engaged in cyber operations, as well as highlight attractive work experiences in the MOD.

With regard to JSDF Cyber reserve personnel[15] who possess cyber skills and serve in various missions together with regular JSDF personnel, they demonstrated a high level of skill and motivation during the multilateral cyber defense exercise "Locked Shields 2025" and contributed to the Japanese team in FY2025. The MOD/JSDF will also steadily advance initiatives, such as recruiting external cyber workforce with no JSDF experience as Candidates for JSDF reserve personnel and appointing them as JSDF Cyber reserve personnel.

Additionally, using the JSDF Scholarship Program, which provides a fixed amount of educational funding each month, learning support will be provided to outstanding students

15 JSDF Reserve Personnel with System Protection (Cyber) Skills

interested in JSDF cyber operations.

At events, such as recruitment information sessions held at universities, high schools, and vocational schools throughout Japan, the MOD will provide detailed explanations of the various recruitment categories that meet each individual's lifestyle and desired career, including recruitment of experienced AO/TO and recruitment as a mid-career CO/technical sergeant and as specified fixed-term JSDF personnel or cybersecurity adviser. In addition, to further promote the acceptance of external workforce with specialized qualifications and work experience, we will make use of opportunities, such as the MOD cyber contest, to provide information on the MOD's cyber personnel recruitment and highlight attractive work experiences to potential candidates for JSDF personnel. The MOD/JSDF also provides explanations on recent cyber threats and the MOD's cyber operations to students of vocational schools, colleges of technology, and universities studying information processing, programming, and related fields, with the aim of connecting their regular academic studies to practical work and deepening their interest in the MOD/JSDF.

(2) Initiatives for Training the Cyber Workforce

The MOD/JSDF possesses specialized institutions including the GSDF System and Signal/Cyber School. It is not necessary to have knowledge of JSDF operations or cyber-related knowledge in advance. Personnel can acquire cyber knowledge, depending on their level, after joining the JSDF with additional opportunities for training and studying externally. In addition, environments are currently in place for persons with advanced cyber skills field to hone their skills through a wealth of opportunities such as practical training and exchange of opinions. Leveraging these strength, the MOD/JSDF will recruit human resources interested in engaging in the MOD/JSDF cyber operations in the MOD/JSDF and becoming part of a highly skilled cyber workforce.

Commentary

The MOD Cyber Workforce Comprehensive Strategy

In order to respond to cyberattacks, which are becoming more advanced and sophisticated every day and now pose a serious threat to national security, it is vital to secure and develop an excellent cyber workforce. As the importance of the cyber workforce increases across society, it is believed that creating a virtuous cycle of the cyber workforce between the MOD and the private sector will lead to raising the level of the cyber response capabilities of Japan overall.

Based on this recognition, in July 2024, the MOD formulated the MOD Cyber Workforce Comprehensive Strategy, which comprehensively presents the MOD/JSDF's basic approach with regard to securing and developing the cyber workforce.

In order to deepen expertise in the cyber field, it is essential to establish career paths that allow personnel to continuously engage in cyber-related duties after joining the JSDF. To achieve such career paths, an examination category covering cyber and other specialized fields was established as a recruitment category for the Employment Examination for General Officer Candidates (Ground Self-Defense Force). Recruitment under this category began in FY2025. Personnel recruited through this category are expected to cultivate further expertise primarily through assignments in cyber units, while also undergoing further education and training within and outside the organization. In the future, they will become commanders of cyber units and play a key role in Japan's cybersecurity field.

The MOD/JSDF will continue to advance the necessary initiatives to secure and develop the cyber workforce, focusing on the measures outlined in the strategy.



JSDF reserve personnel participating in an international cyber exercise

VOICE

To Protect the GSDF's C4ISRT (Command, Control, Communication, Computer, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Targeting) from Cyber Threats

TAO Issei, Captain (GSDF), Operations and Planning Officer, GSDF Cyber Protection Unit (Ichigaya)

I belong to the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) Cyber Protection Unit, which works around the clock to respond to various threats and protect the GSDF's information systems from cyberattacks and other threats.

I am in charge of education and training related to countering these threats. We provide trainings within and outside the JSDF, with the aim of enhancing the knowledge, skills, and operational effectiveness necessary for protecting units from cyberattacks.

Because multilateral cooperation is critical for dealing with all cyber threats, we actively participate in multilateral trainings with our ally and like-minded countries, including the U.S. and U.K. forces, for further strengthening our capabilities.

The insights obtained through multilateral trainings and from persons with a wide range of experiences have contributed to our understanding of international trends required for countering cyberattacks and other threats. I will continue dedicating myself to my duty to ensure that both our workforce and units remain capable of responding to increasingly diverse and sophisticated threats.

Last but not least, I am aware that a digital category (covering cyber) has been added to the FY2025 Employment Examination for JSDF General Officer Candidates. I look forward to the day when we, as personnel sharing the same aspirations, can work together to contribute to the defense of Japan by applying the knowledge and experience we have gained.



The author (far right) explaining a training to the U.S. Marine Corps

4 Further Promotion of Work-Life Balance and Women's Participation

In and after 2015, the MOD/JSDF drew up and revised the "Action Plan for Promoting the Active Participation of Female Employees and Work-Life Balance at the MOD" (hereinafter the "Action Plan"), and in 2026, established a new Action Plan based around the pillars of (1) working style reform to promote further work-life balance and (2) promotion of active participation of diverse talent, including female employees. Through this plan, related initiatives are being advanced even more.

1 Working Style Reform to Further Promote Work-Life Balance

(1) Improving "Sense of Worthwhile Engagement" and Ensuring "Sense of Comfort"

To enable each employee to perform their duties with a greater sense of worthwhile engagement, employees themselves will be encouraged to develop a clear understanding of and articulate their medium- to long-term career aspirations. At the same time, senior officials and others will undertake systematic and organization-wide efforts to further enhance sense of worthwhile engagement.

In addition, the MOD/JSDF will promote reviews of work processes aimed at rectifying long working hours and improving productivity, while ensuring flexibility in work hours and locations, improving working environments, and developing an environment with zero tolerance for harassment of any kind.

As improvements in the quality and quantity of operations are being sought after in defense administration, internal bureaus are encouraging endeavors to boost the sense of worthwhile engagement of all employees to maximize organizational performance. Boosting a sense of worthwhile engagement requires increasing both (1) a work motivation that arises from a sense of mission, feedback from others, and a keen sense of personal growth, and (2) sense of comfort derived from the workplace environment, personal relationships, and mental and physical well-being, and then

combining them. Based on this basic concept, the MOD/JSDF fosters (1) work motivation, business execution and performance appraisals based on MVV (Mission, Vision and Values) of each division and department, as well as reassignment of talent (internal open recruitment) that encourages self-directed career building based on members' stated interests and ambitions. Moreover, efforts are made to ensure appropriate treatment for personnel engaged in highly intensive work, such as emergency response. Also, to foster (2) sense of comfort, efforts are being made that include office reform, introduction of online platforms, and significantly bolstering management-related training. It is crucial to implement these measures continuously in a manner that is acceptable to employees, and the entire organization, from top management to general employees, strives to pursue them.

(2) Working Style Reform in the Workplace

Efforts aimed at the promotion of work-life balance will lead to effective initiatives and the creation of a culture in which employees consider specific measures for improving their workplace environment based on the actual conditions of their workplace. Based on this perspective, the MOD has been holding the "Competition for Initiatives to Promote Working Style Reform at the Ministry of Defense" with awards presented to particularly outstanding initiatives, which are then introduced within the MOD to help other employees reform their working styles.

(3) Ensuring Flexible Working Hours and Location

As the number of employees facing time constraints due to childcare, nursing care, and other responsibilities continues to increase, the MOD/JSDF has introduced early/late shift hours and flexible work schedules, allowing personnel to flexibly choose their working hours so that all employees can fully demonstrate their abilities and thrive in the workplace. In 2025, it is striving to promote even more flexible working styles through actions such as making flexible work schedules even more accommodating. Work from home has now been made possible at all institutions, except for those jobs where it is not feasible due to the unique nature of the professional duties. The MOD/JSDF will continue to promote digitalization, including the computerization of documents, to encourage establishing work processes enabling tasks to be completed at home.

(4) Rectification of Long Working Hours

Through the systemization of working hour management, surveys conducted on overtime work, etc., efforts are being made to rectify the long working hours that may be detrimental to the physical and mental health and welfare of employees.

(5) Development of an Environment that Enables Employees to Play an Active Role while Engaging in Childcare and Nursing Care

The MOD/JSDF is developing schemes that enable employees to balance work with their childcare/nursing care commitments by hiring fixed-term staff to secure alternate staff who take over for those on childcare or other leave. In particular, the MOD/JSDF is endeavoring to support the use of paternity leave or time off work by all male employees with a newborn to encourage them to play a part in home life. The goal is to enable them to take paternity leave or time off for approximately one month or more.

The MOD/JSDF is also developing an environment that enables its employees to balance work life with their family life through various initiatives, such as by providing explanations on systems related to childcare and nursing care, introducing role models, and creating "childcare forms" to help managers and the human resources department better understand the details of the situation surrounding their employees' childcare. A system has also been established to allow JSDF personnel who retired mid-career due to childcare or nursing care commitments to be re-employed.

(6) Ensuring Childcare Services

To maintain a permanent state of readiness, it is important to develop an environment in which MOD/JSDF personnel can devote themselves to their duties without worrying about childcare or other concerns due to the unique nature of the JSDF personnel's work and the change of the supply-demand balance related to childcare in society as a whole. The MOD/JSDF has set up workplace nurseries at camps and bases in 9 locations across Japan. In addition, in the event of situations where a quick response is required such as disaster relief operation, the MOD/JSDF promotes support measures to provide temporary childcare in JSDF camps and bases for children of JSDF personnel when emergency attendance at work is needed, and has commenced full-scale operation of temporary childcare services at JSDF camps and bases.



JSDF service member arriving after dropping their child at a workplace nursery

2 Promoting the Active Participation of Diverse Talent, Including Female Personnel

(1) Promoting Women's Participation

For the further expansion of the recruitment and promotion of female talent, the MOD/JSDF has been making various efforts to promote the activities of motivated and qualified female talent by setting up specific goals under the Action Plan. Moreover, as part of its efforts related to Women, Peace and Security[16] (WPS), Japan is promoting the participation of women in disaster prevention and disaster response efforts and decision-making for security policy.

See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 4-3 (Initiatives to Promote Women, Peace and Security (WPS))

a. Expansion of the Recruitment and Promotion of Female Talent

The MOD/JSDF has set numerical targets in the Action Plan for the systematic expansion of the recruitment and promotion of female talent. In addition, based on the NSS, the MOD/JSDF will hasten to systematically promote the development of an educational infrastructure that supports women's activities, as well as women's quarters, toilets, and baths in military buildings and naval vessels in anticipation of a greater number of female JSDF talent.

(a) Female JSDF Personnel

As of the end of March 2026, the number of female JSDF personnel is about 20,000 (about 9.3% of the total JSDF personnel). Compared with ten years ago (end of March 2016 when female JSDF personnel made up about 5.9% of the total JSDF personnel), this is a rise of 3.4 percentage points, indicating that the ratio of female JSDF personnel has been on the rise in recent years.

Regarding the recruitment of female JSDF personnel, the targets for the proportion of female JSDF personnel among total newly employed JSDF personnel in and after FY2026, and the proportion of female JSDF personnel among total JSDF personnel by FY2035 have increased to at least 20% and 13%, respectively. In addition, with regard to promotion, the MOD/JSDF aims to increase the proportion of women among JSDF personnel with a rank of field officer or higher to at least 6% by the end of FY2030.

(b) Female Defense Officials, Instructors, and Other Female Talent

As of the end of March 2026, the number of female civilian talent—defense officials, technical officials, instructors, and others—is approximately 5,700 (about 28.6% of the total). Compared with ten years ago (end of March 2016 when females made up 23.6% of the total), this is a rise of 5 percentage points, indicating that the ratio of female talent has been on the rise in recent years.

The MOD aims for women to make up 40% or more of the hires in FY2026 and beyond. Promotion targets to be achieved by the end of FY2030 include increasing the proportion of women of the unit chief level at the MOD proper or its equivalent to 36%, division director at local organizations/division deputy director level at the MOD proper or its equivalent to 14%, the division director level at the MOD proper or its equivalent to 10%, and designated official or equivalent to 5%.

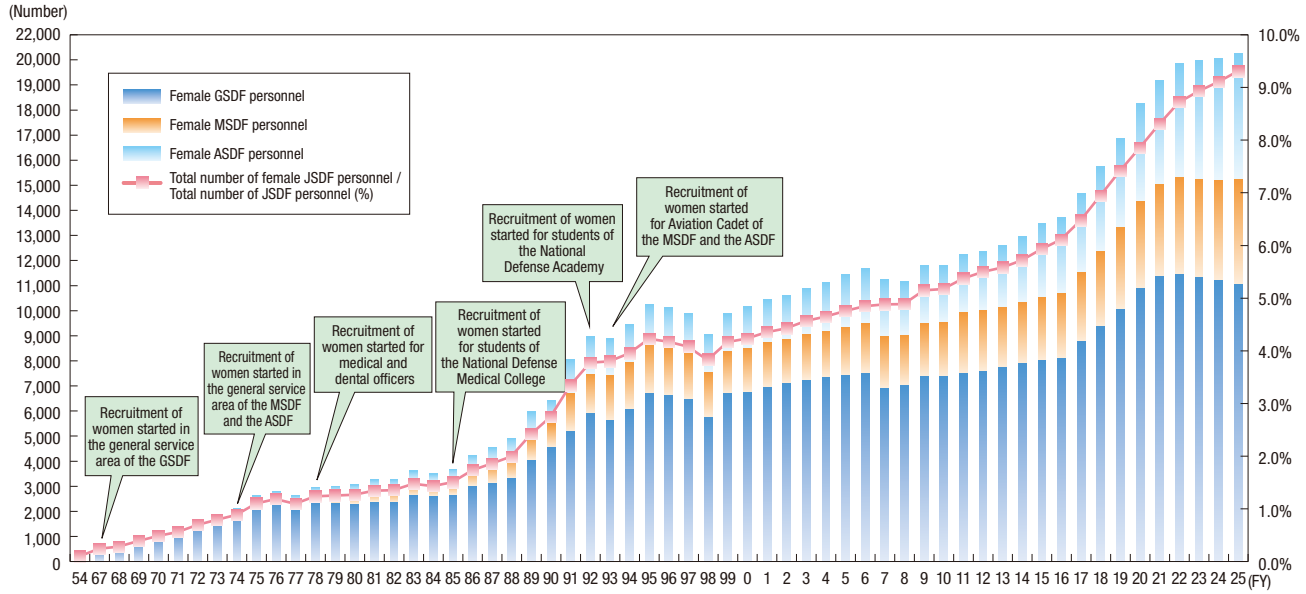
See Fig. V-2-2-7 (Women's Participation at the MOD and Targets and Current Values for the Action Plan); Fig. V-2-2-8 (Changes in Incumbent Female JSDF Personnel)

Fig. V-2-2-7 Women's Participation at the MOD and Targets and Current Values for the Action Plan

	Items	Target	Current value
Recruitment and promotion of female JSDF personnel	Proportion of newly employed female JSDF personnel among total newly employed JSDF personnel	20% or more (each fiscal year from FY2026 onward)	18.1% (FY2025)
	Proportion of female JSDF personnel among total JSDF personnel	13% or more (FY2026 to FY2035)	9.3% (FY2025)
	Proportion of women among JSDF personnel with a rank of field officer or higher	6% or more (FY2026 to FY2030)	4.8% (FY2025)
Recruitment and promotion of female talent -defense officials, instructors, and others	The proportion of female talent recruited from those who passed the recruitment examination for national public employees	40% or more (each fiscal year from FY2026 onward)	41.8% (April 1, 2026)
	Proportion of women at the unit chief level in the MOD (Level (I) Class 3 or 4 talent working at the MOD (MOD consists of the internal bureau of the MOD and the internal bureau of Acquisition, Technology & Logistics Agency (ATLA))	36% (FY2026 to FY2030)	35.7% (July 1, 2025)
	The proportion of women as director of the regional agency division, equivalent to the assistant director in MOD or its equivalent (Level (I) Class 5 or 6 talent)	14% (FY2026 to FY2030)	10.1% (July 1, 2025)
	The proportion of women at the division director level in MOD or its equivalent	10% (FY2026 to FY2030)	6.1% (July 1, 2025)
	The proportion of women at the designated official level or equivalent	5% (FY2026 to FY2030)	3.6% (July 1, 2025)

16 A concept that encapsulates the idea that peace is more sustainable when women take the lead and actively participate in all levels of conflict prevention, response and reconstruction, and peacebuilding, as well as disaster prevention, while recognizing the importance of protection and relief for women and girls, and those in need, as they are more vulnerable during conflicts and disasters.

Fig. V-2-2-8 Changes in Incumbent Female JSDF Personnel



(Note) As of the end of March 2026, the total number of female JSDF personnel is 20,261 (approximately 9.3% of the total number of the JSDF personnel)

b. Significance of Promoting Active Engagement of Female JSDF Personnel and Personnel Management Policy

With JSDF duties becoming increasingly diverse and complex, JSDF personnel are required more than ever to have multifaceted capabilities, including higher levels of knowledge, decision-making ability, and skills. In addition, under a severe recruitment environment due to the declining birth rate and continuing trend of higher education, it is anticipated that the number of JSDF personnel with time and location restraints, including those involved in childcare, nursing care, and other responsibilities, will significantly increase.

In light of these changes, the JSDF is required to evolve from a conventional organization with an emphasis on homogeneity among the members, into an organization that is capable of incorporating diverse human resources in a flexible manner.

At present, the largest human resource that the JSDF has not been able to fully utilize is women, who account for half of the population targeted for recruitment. Promoting the active engagement of female JSDF personnel has the following significance: (1) securing useful human resources; (2) utilizing diverse perspectives; and (3) reflecting values of the nation. For this reason, the MOD/JSDF has decided to open up a path for female personnel with motivation, ability, and aptitude to have opportunities to demonstrate their abilities in various fields, with the aim of doubling the ratio of female JSDF personnel.

In terms of employing and promoting female JSDF personnel, the MOD/JSDF sets out a personnel management policy to ensure equal opportunity between men and women and assign the right person to the right place based on the person's motivation and ability/aptitude.

c. Removal of Assignment Restrictions on Female JSDF Personnel

The MOD/JSDF has steadily removed restrictions on assigning female JSDF personnel to vocations such as fighter pilot, paratrooper, and submarine crew member. In July 2025, assignment restrictions were removed for certain units within the Chemical Weapon Defense Unit, effectively eliminating all assignment restrictions on female JSDF personnel within the GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF.

Preparations are also underway to turn the GSDF High Technical School into a coeducational school in 2028.

(2) Promoting the Participation of Mid-career Hires and Senior Personnel

Amid the continuing decline in the birth rate and aging of society, as well as the increasing diversification and complexity of the missions of the JSDF, it is important for the MOD/JSDF to utilize the capabilities and expertise of diverse personnel. For mid-career hires, senior personnel, and other personnel who are expected to increase in number, efforts will be made to ensure that they can fully draw on their respective insights and experience and play an active role.

VOICE

Nuclear Biological Chemical Weapon Defense Unit (The Removal of the Remaining Restrictions on Women's Assignments)

YOSHIMOTO Mitsuki, Second Lieutenant (GSDF), Decontamination Platoon Leader, Ohmiya, Central Nuclear Biological Chemical Weapon Defense Unit

In July 2025, restrictions on the assignment of female personnel to certain chemical weapon defense units of the Ground Self-Defense Force were lifted, resulting in the complete removal of restrictions on female assignments across the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces. It was assessed that improvements, such as in personal protective equipment, allow for safer operations than before, and that operations can accommodate women's health. Following the removal of the restrictions, the JSDF can now send motivated women to necessary places.

I serve as the first female decontamination platoon leader with the Central Nuclear Biological Chemical Weapon Defense Unit. I was inspired to pursue a career in the chemical unit after joining the JSDF and becoming keenly aware about the important role played by chemical units in responding to incidents, including the Tokyo subway sarin gas attack and nuclear disasters.

At disaster sites and in other situations, female personnel can provide meticulous support from a woman's perspective, helping to reassure affected women. I believe female personnel in the chemical unit will have an even more important role in the future. To be able to fulfill these expectations, I will devote myself to training units and personnel capable of accomplishing their missions.



The author working at the office

5 Developing an Environment of Zero Tolerance for Harassment of Any Kind

The Japanese people have high expectations of the MOD/JSDF, and it is indispensable for the Ministry to gain their support and trust all the time to fully exercise its ability to complete its duties. In order to meet their expectations to this end, the JSDF personnel are required to be an invariably disciplined existence more than ever.

The MOD/JSDF has taken various measures such as thorough instructions on service discipline in order to foster well-disciplined personnel. Nevertheless, in FY2024, 262 personnel were subject to disciplinary action on the grounds of harassment. Of these, 8 personnel were subject to the most serious disciplinary action of dismissal[17] (3 power harassment cases and 5 sexual harassment cases). In FY2025, the hotline for harassment consultations received 1,479 consultations from JSDF personnel.

See Fig. V-2-2-9 (The Number of the Personnel Subject to Have Taken Disciplinary Action for the Substantiated Harassment Case); Fig. V-2-2-10 (Changed in the Number of Consultations to the MOD Harassment Hotline)

17 The types of disciplinary action that may be taken include dismissal, demotion, suspension, reduction in pay, and reprimand. The disciplinary actions are determined taking into consideration of a comprehensive evaluation of the causes, motives, circumstances of the disciplinary violation, the position and rank of the offender, and the potential impact on the unit as well as the broader impact.

Fig. V-2-2-9 The Number of the Personnel Subject to Have Taken Disciplinary Action for the Substantiated Harassment Case

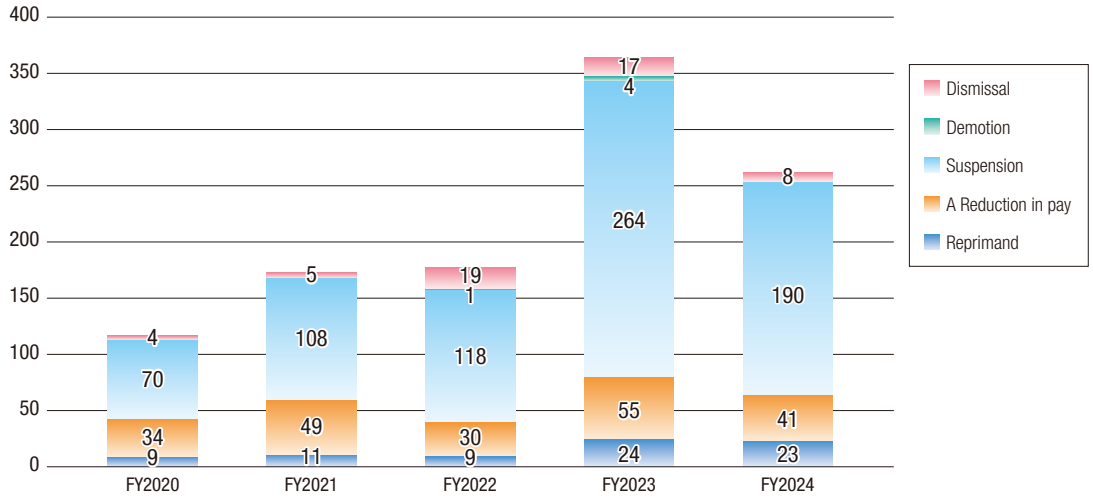


Fig. V-2-2-10 Changes in the Number of Consultations to the MOD Harassment Hotline

(Unit: No. of Cases)

Category	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
Power Harassment	1,706	1,217	782	581	689
Sexual Harassment	82	136	59	51	59
Maternity Harassment	23	44	16	21	24
Consultation Desk for Each Institution	500	725	850	769	707
Total	2,311	2,122	1,707	1,422	1,479

In order to exert organizational strength and respond decisively to a wide range of situations, the MOD/JSDF must develop a working environment that enables JSDF personnel, who are the core of Japan's defense capability, to perform their tasks confidently with high morale and peace of mind. Particularly within the MOD/JSDF, an organization of people, harassment must not be tolerated, as it destroys mutual trust among the personnel and shakes the very foundation of the organization.

Based on this recognition, the MOD/JSDF has been implementing ongoing initiatives, taking into account the 2023 recommendations of the MOD Committee of Experts on Harassment Prevention and Measures. These 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

REFERENCE: Promote active participation and work-life balance of female personnel
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/profile/worklife/index.html

REFERENCE: Active participation of female JSDF personnel
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/gsdf/jieikanbosyu/about/woman-success.html

MOVIE: Female JSDF personnel are on the job! We're J★Women
URL: https://youtu.be/-bcA9G417vU

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.

The MOD will make continued efforts to reform personnel awareness and implement effective initiatives, along with consistently reviewing its measures to keep up with the times by incorporating insights from external experts, thereby developing an environment of zero tolerance for harassment of any kind.

6 Support for JSDF Personnel and Their Families

1 Support for Life Planning

As part of the efforts to elevate the nation's asset management, including enhancing NISA and iDeCo, the government is implementing financial and economic education from an impartial perspective to boost financial literacy, and promoting efforts that support stable household asset formation.

Against this backdrop, the MOD/JSDF offers life planning seminars in accordance with the life stage of the personnel, with the goal of deepening their understanding of investing, speculating, gambling, and debt to protect their assets and living circumstances. In this way, the MOD/JSDF strives to continually provide information on life planning from soon after enlistment and motivate personnel to create a life plan.

2 MOD Mental Health Initiatives

The fact that MOD personnel have lost their precious lives to suicide is truly tragic for the families of the deceased and a huge loss to the organization.

In 2022, the MOD formulated the "Basic Policy on Mental Health in the Ministry of Defense" at the MOD Suicide and Accident Prevention Headquarters. The policy is intended to contribute to maintaining the JSDF's strength by promoting the mental health of each employee and preventing suicide and the onset of mental illness among personnel.

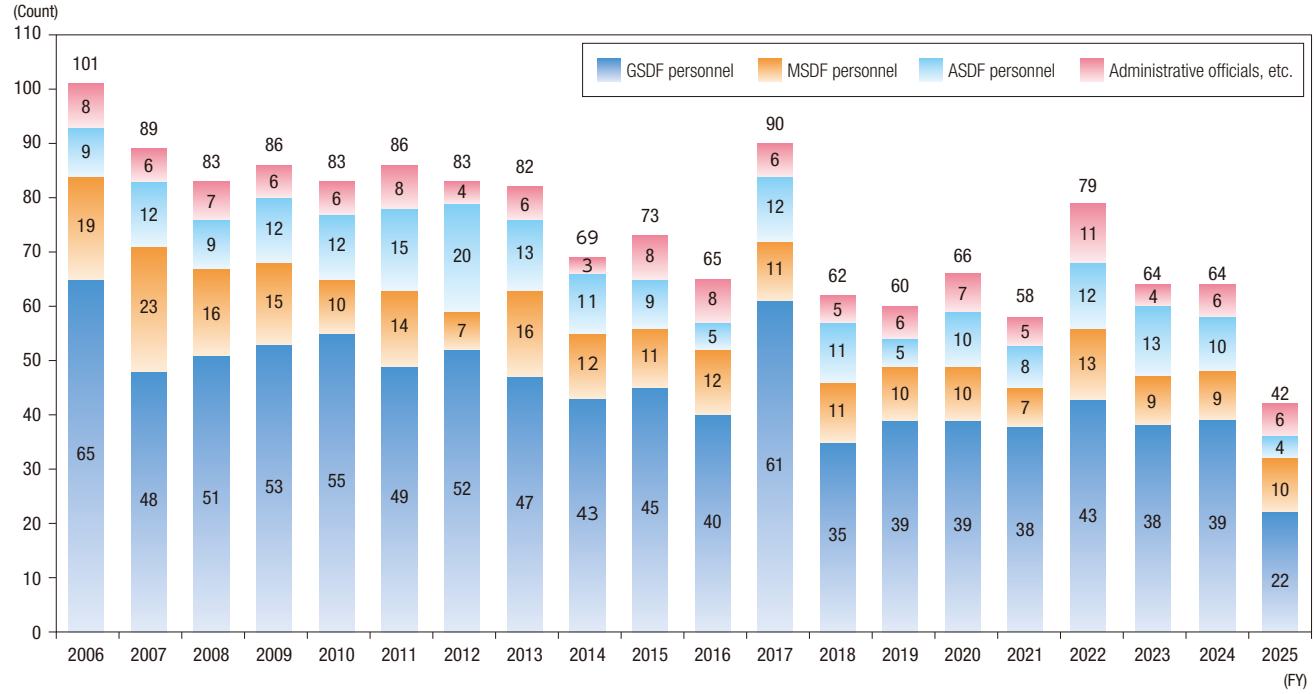
Based on these guidelines, the MOD has engaged in improving the workplace environments by raising awareness of mental health checks for all employees and by educating them to make use of counseling services, as well as by promoting measures related to work-life balance. The MOD is also strengthening its support system by securing qualified counselors, collaborating with supervisors, counselors, and medical institutions, and diversifying consultation channels.

See Fig. V-2-2-11 (Changes in the Number of Suicide Counts among MOD Personnel)

REFERENCE: The Ministry of Defense Committee of Experts on Harassment Prevention Measures
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/policy/agenda/meeting/harassment/index.html

REFERENCE: Promotion of harassment prevention measures and consultation desk
URL: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/profile/harassment/index.html

Fig. V-2-2-11 Changes in the Number of Suicide Counts among MOD Personnel



3 Initiatives to Combat Gambling and Other Addictions

Gambling and other addictions that are types of psychiatric disorders can lead to debt and crime, and have a serious impact on human relationships. Therefore, based on the Basic Act on Measures Against Gambling and Other Addictions, the government as a whole is promoting general and systematic initiatives in line with the "Basic Plan to Promote Measures Against Gambling and Other Addictions."

The MOD is promoting initiatives to deepen the personnel's understanding of addictions, including gambling, and to ensure appropriate treatment in cases such as when personnel are suspected of having gambling and other addictions in the workplace.

4 Initiatives to Support Families

In addition to exchanges between units and personnel's families, as well as between the families, the MOD in cooperation with relevant external groups and organizations is also actively working to develop a family support system to be implemented in the event of large-scale natural disasters and other events, which will include receiving cooperation in confirming the safety of the family members of JSDF personnel and providing them with assistance in their livelihoods. In March 2025, the MOD/JSDF, the JSDF Family Association,[18] and Taiyukai[19] concluded an agreement on cooperating to support families of all JSDF personnel.

For units dispatched overseas or to vessels for operations expected to continue for an extended period of time, the MOD has been creating a communication environment that allows the personnel and their families to get in direct contact. Moreover, the MOD has been implementing a range of support measures for the families of the personnel, including supporting additional shipments of comfort items sent from families to JSDF personnel deployed overseas, holding briefing sessions and establishing consultation desks (family support centers) for families, and creating a website for the families of JSDF personnel.

5 Commemorating Personnel who Perished in the Line of Duty

Since the establishment of the National Police Reserve in 1950, JSDF personnel have endeavored to complete their noble missions to protect the peace and independence of Japan with a strong sense of responsibility, regardless of

18 A public interest incorporated association comprised of family members of JSDF personnel that cooperates with and supports the JSDF
19 A public interest incorporated association primarily comprised of former JSDF personnel that aims to be a bridge between citizens and the JSDF

danger. During this time period, however, more than 2,100 personnel have lost their lives in the line of duty.

In the MOD/JSDF, funeral ceremonies are carried out by the respective units to which JSDF personnel who perished in the line of duty belonged in order to express condolences. Moreover, in order to eternally recognize the achievements of the personnel who perished in the line of duty and to express the deepest respect and condolences, memorial ceremonies are carried out in various forms, such as the Memorial Service for Members of the JSDF Who Lost Their Lives in the Line of Duty conducted with the participation of the Prime Minister. The achievements of 30 JSDF members (13 GSDF, 10 MSDF, 6 ASDF, and 1 organization, etc. members) who lost their lives in the line of duty were recognized in the Memorial Service in FY2025.[20]



The Prime Minister offering a flower at the FY2025 Memorial Service for Members of the JSDF Who Lost Their Lives in the Line of Duty (October 2025)

20 The Monument for JSDF Personnel who Perished in the Line of Duty was constructed in 1962 in Ichigaya. In 1998, the Memorial Zone in its current form was completed by combining this monument with other monuments located in the same area. The MOD holds an annual memorial ceremony for JSDF personnel who perished in the line of duty, led by the Defense Minister and with the attendance of surviving family members and the Prime Minister. At the Monument for JSDF Personnel who Perished in the Line of Duty in the Memorial Zone, there is a nameplate containing the names and other information of personnel who perished in the line of duty. When foreign dignitaries such as Defense Ministers visit the MOD, they make offerings of flowers, expressing their respect and condolences to personnel who perished in the line of duty. Memorial ceremonies are also held at individual JSDF camps and bases.

Section 3 Other Initiatives

1 Transforming Medical Functions

The NDS stipulates that, from the perspective of sustainability and resiliency, the JSDF medical force, which has been placing importance on sustaining the health of JSDF personnel, will transform into an organization that saves the lives of JSDF personnel who carry out their missions in a contingency in spite of danger.

Under circumstances where the JSDF's missions are becoming more diverse and internationalized, it is important to accurately address the needs of various medical activities, such as providing medical support in disaster relief dispatches and international peace cooperation activities, as well as capacity building on military medicine.

The MOD/JSDF is therefore enhancing its medical functions: (i) Strengthening seamless medical care and evacuation posture from the frontlines to the destination hospital, (ii) Reinforcement of integrated medical operational posture, and (iii) Fundamental management reform of the National Defense Medical College as the three pillars to improve the combat casualty care capabilities. In addition, the MOD/JSDF is further enhancing and strengthening its medical capabilities so that they can appropriately respond to various emergency events and carry out its multiple missions in Japan and abroad.

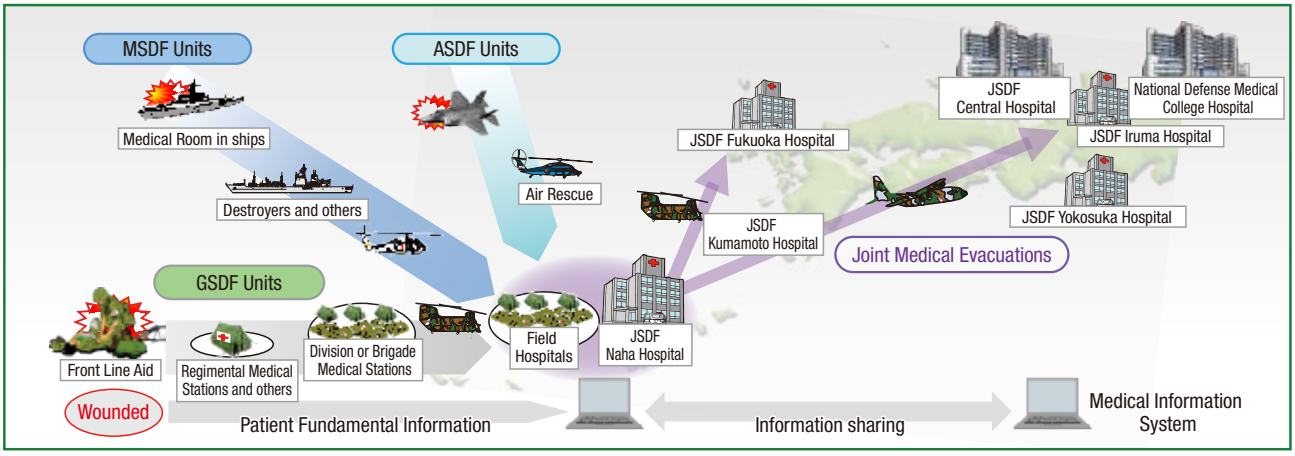
1 Fundamentally Strengthen the Combat Casualty Care Capabilities

(1) Strengthening Seamless Medical Care and Evacuation Posture

In order to improve the life-saving rate of injured JSDF personnel on the front line, it is necessary to strengthen the respective functions of first aid at the front line, providing emergency medical care near the site of injury, medical evacuation, and destination JSDF hospitals.

See Fig. V-2-3 (Conceptual Image of a Seamless Posture for Medical Care and Evacuation)

Fig. V-2-3 Conceptual Image of a Seamless Posture for Medical Care and Evacuation



a. Enhancement of the First Aid at the Front Line and Medical Care During Evacuation

In response to injured JSDF personnel at the front line, frontline medics[1] first provide life-saving procedures,[2] then safely and quickly send the patients back to JSDF hospitals for specialized treatment and complete cure after performing

1 Frontline medics refer to those who have been certified as Licensed Assistant Nurses (see "Assistant Nurse" as defined in the Act on Public Health Nurses, Midwives, and Nurses) or Emergency Life-Saving Technicians (see "Emergency Life-Saving Technician" as defined in the Emergency Life-Saving Technicians Act), and who have completed the training curriculum approved by the council stipulated in the Directives Relating to Emergency Life-Saving Actions.

2 First aid treatment for those with symptoms such as airway obstruction and tension pneumothorax caused by injuries, and other treatments such as administration of analgesic for pain relief.

damage control surgery (DCS)[3] at medical bases equipped with capabilities such as the field operation system.[4]

To improve the life-saving rate of personnel, a medical support system/posture is being developed that enables patients to be treated within 10 minutes of being wounded. Each branch of the JSDF has been providing education and training to JSDF personnel who are Licensed Assistant Nurses and Emergency Life-Saving Technicians so they can conduct life-saving procedures near the scene of injury on JSDF personnel injured in the line of duty, and promoting their designation and deployment to units as frontline medics. Furthermore, the MOD/JSDF is expanding the range of treatment that can be provided, which will contribute to saving the lives of injured personnel even in situations where waiting times until evacuation and subsequent transport is prolonged.

In addition, to construct a rapid and reliable evacuation posture using all means of evacuation, each JSDF branch is enhancing education and training tailored to the characteristics of units and equipment for medical care during evacuation on board ships and aircraft, and promoting the development of training equipment for medical transport by air and teaching materials for improving first aid capabilities.

The JSDF will also promote development and integration of medical training infrastructure necessary for combat casualty care training and common to all SDFs, aiming to improve common knowledge and skills.

b. Enhancing the Functions of JSDF Hospitals and Establishing Medical Bases

The role of JSDF hospitals is to admit and treat injured JSDF personnel and other persons transported from their area of activity in various emergency situations. In peacetime, these hospitals also provide medical care to JSDF personnel and their families, etc. These hospitals also play the role of educational institutions that train medical personnel to maintain and enhance their skills.

In the southwestern region of Japan, to enhance the function and resilience of JSDF hospitals, including Naha Hospital, which serve as evacuation points, enhancement of functionality such as increasing the number of beds, expanding the number of departments, and adding underground facilities is planned.

c. Establishing a Blood Transfusion System for Combat Casualty Care

Most combat casualty deaths are due to exsanguination from bomb wounds, gunshot wounds, and other similar causes. To prevent such deaths, it is extremely important to secure blood products for transfusion. For this reason, the MOD/JSDF established the "Expert Panel on Blood Transfusion during Combat Casualty Care of the MOD/JSDFs" in 2023 to tackle the construction of an operational posture that autonomously secures and stockpiles blood products[5] in the JSDF, based on NDS. Following the recommendations of the expert panel in 2024, the MOD/JSDF considered the establishment of an implementation system for blood transfusions in combat casualty care, and in June 2025, it formulated an operational concept for blood transfusion during combat casualty care of the MOD/JSDF. Based on this concept, the MOD/JSDF is currently preparing a system to produce blood products, as well as the materials and equipment necessary for their production.

(2) Reinforcement of Integrated Medical Operational Posture

Since many medical functions are common to all JSDF branches, joint medical training and the unification of various medical education program are being promoted to strengthen an integrated operational posture in the medical field, which is closely involved in supporting unit operations.

Furthermore, medical supplies and equipment will be standardized to ensure interoperability among JSDF services, and an information system will be established to ensure that necessary medical information for each JSDF personnel can be accessed comprehensively and on time to share information centrally from the front line to the receiving hospital.

(3) Strengthening the Function of the NDMC

As the only educational institution of the MOD/JSDF for the education and training of medical officers (physicians) and nursing officers (public health nurses and registered nurses) in JSDF as well as nurses serving as technical officials, the NDMC plays the role of developing and producing primary healthcare professionals as well as maintaining and enhancing their professional competencies.

The DBP stipulates that the NDMC will strengthen education and research, including combat casualty care capabilities improvement. Specifically, it calls for strengthening education for medical and nursing officers in areas such as trauma surgery and treatment, as well as promoting the necessary research in defense medicine to advance the quality of the JSDF's medical services in areas such as the treatment of trauma, burns, PTSD, and rehabilitation, infectious disease control, and mental health. In particular, research on artificial platelets could be beneficial in treating combat injuries if it can be successfully put to

3 Emergency operations to stop hemorrhage by pressing/placing gauze and sutures, etc. on damaged internal organs, and to prevent contamination with intestinal tract contents. The purpose is to stabilize the patient's condition to the level where transfer is possible.

4 Mobile operating room sheltered in a large truck with one of the four functions necessary for operation (operation, operation preparation, sterilization, medical supply vehicles). Thoracotomy, laparotomy, craniotomy, and other operations to save lives can be conducted.

5 The initiative aims for a posture that enables various blood products necessary in combat casualty care to be secured where required, when needed and in the quantities needed, through independent judgment based on the progress of military operations and combat conditions, without relying on commercial availability.

practical use. Additionally, in FY2024, a "Center for Trauma, Burn and Tactical Medicine" was established at the NDMC, and development of the necessary readiness is underway to train medical and nursing officers capable of providing medical treatment in combat casualty care.

In addition, a system will be established to provide highly advanced medical care at the NDMC Hospital to allow it to play the role of admitting severely injured JSDF personnel who cannot be treated at JSDF hospitals.

The operation of the NDMC Hospital will also be fundamentally reformed to transform it into a clinical site for medical officers, etc., to treat such combat casualty.

2 Strengthening the Medical Function to Respond to Various Situations and Diverse Missions

(1) Securing and Training Medical Personnel

The MOD/JSDF is working to secure and develop medical officers while maintaining and enhancing their professional proficiency through strengthened postgraduate clinical education at the NDMC and other institutions, the promotion of various initiatives to expand opportunities for clinical practice, and the acquisition and advancement of specialized knowledge and capabilities in fields such as infectious diseases and emergency medicine.

Similar measures are taken for nursing officers to maintain and improve their professional knowledge and capabilities through clinical practice at JSDF's and civilian hospitals, etc.

Moreover, healthcare professionals, including radiological technologists, clinical laboratory technicians, and emergency life-saving technicians, are educated and trained at JSDF hospitals, schools and other relevant institutions to ensure that the JSDF can effectively conduct a wide range of missions, including international peace cooperation activities and large-scale disasters, and other contingency missions.

(2) Improving Preparedness Necessary for International Cooperation

A posture capable of carrying out medical activities overseas has been required. To date, the MOD/JSDF has participated in the provision of medical care in overseas disaster areas through international disaster relief activities, and actively conducted joint training and capacity building in medical fields such as undersea medicine, aviation medicine, and disaster medicine for various countries, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

In addition, medical care by JSDF for patients suffering from Category I Infectious Diseases,[6] which are classified as the most dangerous among known infectious diseases under Japanese law, is deemed necessary.

Therefore, the MOD/JSDF has been reinforcing its capabilities by providing the necessary facilities and equipment to units, the NDMC Hospital, and the JSDF Central Hospital, alongside by improving equipment for transporting infectious disease patients.

Moreover, the MOD/JSDF has been promoting the development of capabilities required for various international cooperation activities, which include dispatching JSDF personnel to the medical departments of the U.S. Department of War, international organizations, and other entities.

2 Reinforcement of Policy-Making Function

The NDS stipulates that, for the JSDF to fully exert its capabilities and respond to the severe, complex, and fast-paced strategic environment, strategic and agile defense policy planning and making are required, including in domains such as space, cyberspace, and electromagnetic spectrum. To fundamentally strengthen these functions, the NDS calls for closely cooperating with relevant ministries and agencies, private research institutions, and private companies, particularly those in the defense industry, as well as reviewing and reinforcing the research system of the MOD/JSDF led by the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) and reinforcing its function as an intellectual base.

1 Efforts for Reinforcing Policy-Making Function

In order to obtain policy recommendations for fundamentally reinforcing the strategic and agile defense policy planning and making function based on the NDS, the "Advisory Panel on the Fundamental Strengthening of Defense Capabilities," bringing together leading experts and specialists from various fields, held frank discussions on topics including building an industry-academia-government research and development ecosystem in the security field, and Japan's defense industry and equipment.

MOVIE: NDMC introduction video — "The Power of Smiles"
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSRHeRq5oKk

6 These include Ebola hemorrhagic fever, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, smallpox, South American hemorrhagic fever, plague, Marburg disease, and Lassa fever.

In addition, the National Defense Strategy of Japan states that the MOD/JSDF will strengthen its posture to comprehensively advance, from a strategic perspective, the JSDF's future ways of warfare and the utilization and nurturing of cutting-edge technologies and application of those technologies to defense equipment necessary for future JSDF operations, while closely cooperating with relevant ministries and agencies, private research institutions, and private companies, particularly those with the defense industry as their core.

The MOD's research and educational institutions, including the National Institute for Defense Studies, are working to improve the quality of their research on a routine basis to produce results that contribute to Japan's policy-making and strengthen its function as an intellectual foundation. In addition, from the perspective of promoting public understanding of knowledge and information about Japan's national security policies, including the results of such research:

(1) review and strengthen the research system of the MOD/JSDF by building networking and strengthening institutional collaboration with research and educational institutions, universities, think-tanks, etc., in Japan and abroad;
(2) provide policy-making departments, etc., with high-quality research results backed by advanced expertise and research capabilities;
(3) disseminate highly trustworthy information based on the aforementioned research results, etc.; and
(4) contribute to the promotion of security education by dispatching instructors to educational institutions, etc., holding public symposiums, etc.,

in order to reinforce its intellectual base through NIDS and various schools, among other initiatives.

2 Efforts by the National Institute for Defense Studies

The National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) conducts policy-oriented research and studies primarily on security and military history and policy simulations to promote collaboration with policy-making departments by taking advantage of its unique position as a national academic research and educational institution focused on national security. In addition, as an educational institution equivalent to national defense universities of other countries, it also functions as a university-level national defense educational institution for the training of senior MOD/JSDF officials, and employees of other ministries and agencies.[7] NIDS manages and publishes a large volume of data on military history as a facility possessing historical documents and other materials in accordance with the Act on Management of Public Records and Archives, and serves as the largest research center on military history in Japan.

In FY2023, the Cyber Security Division was established at NIDS in response to research needs in the increasingly important field of cybersecurity based on the DBP, which calls for a review of the research system to support the augmentation of the functions of strategic and agile defense policy planning and formulation, and reinforcement of the system's functions as an intellectual foundation.

NIDS, an institution that plays a role in defense exchange and security dialogue, also emphasizes international exchange and conducts research exchanges with defense universities, security research institutes, etc., in other countries with the main objective of improving the quality of its research and education and contributing to national security by strengthening relations of trust with said countries. Specifically, activities include mutual dispatch of researchers for lectures, holding study groups and participating in international conferences, receiving visits from foreign government and military officials, and inviting foreign researchers and experts. Through these exchanges, the NIDS is improving the quality of its research and studies and strengthening its intellectual network.

In addition, NIDS publishes major research results on its website and proactively disseminates information by issuing various publications, including the "NIDS China Security Report," "NIDS Perspectives," and "Security & Strategy," which have been published annually to date. It also publishes videos of sponsored events and explanatory videos on key points of publications. Researchers at NIDS have also published many books, articles, and essays on their research findings, and include recipients of the 34th Asia-Pacific Award Grand Prize and the 43rd Ishibashi Tanzan Award.

3 Efforts by Other Institutions

The National Defense Academy of Japan (NDA) is responsible for training and educating individuals who are expected to become JSDF officers, providing more advanced training and education for JSDF personnel, etc., and conducting research needed to perform these functions. In its role, the NDA conducts a large volume of general and fundamental research related to defense policy in order to uphold and improve a high standard of research. In addition, the results of the NDA's research that is mainly centered on the themes

7 Starting with programs that commenced in FY2024, NIDS has changed what had been the Regular Course to the National Security Strategist Studies Program, and the Special Course to the National Security Senior Strategist Studies Program, to explore and develop curricula that further improve strategic characteristics.

handled by the Center for Global Security[8] are widely disseminated outside the academy through presentations at seminars and colloquia held by the NDA as well as through online publications, such as the Global Security Seminar Series and the Global Security Study Series.

JSDF Command and Staff Colleges and other institutions periodically hold various security-related seminars and symposiums that are attended by individuals such as researchers from industry, government, and academia, overseas researchers, and foreign military personnel. These contribute to research and studies regarding Japan's national security in the future through discussions and exchange of opinions from a variety of perspectives.

The colleges also strive to obtain knowledge and information necessary for research and studies to maintain and improve the quality of their education and research by hosting visiting researchers as well as participating in exchanges, etc., with educational and research institutions, etc., in Japan and overseas. The colleges proactively disseminate information[9] by publishing major research results and initiatives on their websites, issuing various publications, and through other means.



REFERENCE: Publications issued by NIDS
URL: https://www.nids.mod.go.jp/publication/

8 The Center for Global Security is a department established within the Institute for Advanced Studies and is responsible for planning, drafting, and implementing research and joint research projects related to global security (research conducted jointly with ATLA, etc.), as well as disseminating the results of such global security-related research externally.

9 The JGSDF Training Evaluation Research and Development Command publishes "Ground Defense," the JMSDF Command and Staff College publishes the "Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Command and Staff College Review," and the Air Command and Staff College publishes "Air & Space Power Studies," etc.

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