

THE U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE AND ROLES OF THE JAPAN SELF-DEFENSE FORCES

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Yoshikazu Watanabe • Masanori Yoshida • Masayuki Hironaka



SASAKAWA USA

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Preface

Three recently retired senior officers in the Japan Self-Defense Forces have written a very important account of the development of the three services since the end of the Pacific War. They have combined academic research with their own experiences as participants in many of the events they describe.

From their account the reader can understand the tension among three influences on the development of the Japan Self Defense Forces: first, the legacy of the war years, which established the always defensive and sometimes passive nature of overall Japanese defense policy; second the imperative of working closely with the U.S. armed forces; third, the demands of evolving technology and threats to Japans homeland and its interests. These three influences have shaped the development of the self-defense forces, sometimes in positive, and sometimes in negative ways. General Hironaka, General Watanabe and Admiral Yoshida make positive and practical recommendations for the Japan Self Defense Force for the future, both in developing joint operations, and in developing the capabilities of individual services.

Both the general interested public and military specialists will learn a great deal from this paper. It makes a major contribution both to understanding the evolution of the Japan Self-Defense Forces and projecting the requirements of the future.

Dennis C. Blair

Admiral, U.S. Navy (ret.)

Former Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Command

Foreword

On this occasion, I would like to express my respect to Lieutenant General, JGSDF (Ret.) Yosikazu Watanabe; Admiral, JMSDF (Ret.) Masanari Yoshida; and Lieutenant General, JASDF (Ret.) Masayuki Hironaka, three men who compiled, for the first time in Japan, discussions on the role of the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the U.S.-Japan alliance. Since the entering into force of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty sixty-five years ago in 1951, both the United States and Japan have built up strong alliance relations. From now on, for the peace and prosperity of not only Japan but also the Asia-Pacific, the deepening of U.S.-Japan alliance must not come to an end. The reason for this is related to the important national interests of both the United States and Japan. The relationship between the JSDF and the American military is the core of the U.S.-Japan alliance; however, it is not well known that within this changing security environment, the JSDF is sincerely endeavoring to protect our country and has come to contribute to the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance. With regards to the history of the U.S.-Japan alliance and the JSDF, I sincerely pray that the excellent essays assembled by these three men, which span the past, present, and future, will widely inform the citizens of both Japan and the United States and will help to strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance.

Ryoichi Oriki

General (Ret.), JGSDF
Former Chief of Staff, Joint Staff Office

Executive Summary

Introduction: Research Summary

Japan and the United States have maintained an alliance for over sixty-five years in the postwar period. Their core relationship is an asymmetrical cooperation, involving U.S. Armed Forces' activities and land and facilities supplied by Japan. The relationship between the U.S. Armed Forces and the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) is also an important element in the alliance. Most JSDF personnel believe that the JSDF's performance has greatly contributed to sustaining and expanding the alliance. However, it is not well understood just how the JSDF has contributed to the U.S.–Japan alliance.

This research focuses on the roles of the JSDF in the context of the alliance and how the JSDF, since its inception, has contributed to sustaining and expanding the U.S.–Japan alliance. This research also examines new roles and missions shouldered by the JSDF as well as future challenges for the U.S.–Japan alliance in the changing international security environment. Most arguments are based on discussions with three former JSDF senior officers, currently serving as national security fellows in the United States.

History: Past and Present Roles of the JSDF

The U.S. containment strategy was revised several times during the Cold War era.¹ Despite these changes, the United States held fast to its vision of a stronger JSDF that could maintain the military balance in the Far East region. As the JSDF gradually developed, it played a larger role in the U.S. deterrent strategy through several independent missions: the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) acted as a strategic counterbalance to the threat from the Soviet Union's ground forces; the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) prepared to interdict the Soviet Far Eastern Fleet deployment into the open Pacific; and the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) conducted actual missions, such as aircraft intercept operations (scrambles) against territorial violations by the Soviet Union's air and naval forces. However, the JSDF performance became less effective as a deterrent power in the late 1980s as its technological capabilities fell behind those of the Soviet Armed Forces.

¹ Gaddis, John Lewis. *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy during the Cold War*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982)

Since the end of the Cold War, the strategic roles of the United States and Japan have become less clear because of the marked decline of Russian Armed Forces activities in the Far East region. Japan's revised National Defense Program Outline of 1995 stated that capabilities of the JSDF should be maintained to avoid a power vacuum in the Asia-Pacific region; however, constitutional limits still prevented the JSDF from planning and exercising new missions. The U.S.–Japan Security Declaration of 1996 redefined the JSDF's primary role as defending the Japanese mainland, while supporting more direct cooperation between the U.S. Armed Forces and the JSDF. The U.S. Armed Forces were authorized to deploy to JSDF facilities and use civilian airports or ports under "situations in areas surrounding Japan" that critically impacted Japanese security. The JSDF was authorized to provide logistic support for the U.S. Armed Forces in rear areas.

The terrorist attacks against the United States in 2001 drastically changed the international security environment. As a quick response, the same year, the government of Japan deployed JMSDF tankers to the Indian Ocean. The move was very controversial at the time, but was later codified in a new law approved by the Diet. In 2005, the U.S.–Japan Security Consultative Committee declared the common U.S.–Japan strategic goal as being global peace and stability. Its joint statement pointed out that roles of the U.S. Armed Forces and the JSDF include not only defending nations but also maintaining regional order and cooperating internationally for global peace and stability.

In the mid-2000s, the JSDF was given new missions. It would provide direct transportation or supply support for the U.S. Armed Forces, force protection support for U.S. bases in Japan, and JMSDF fuel supply support in the Indian Ocean. Reconstruction support missions for Iraq and anti-piracy activities drastically expanded the JSDF's international operations. In addition, tight U.S.–Japan cooperation for ballistic missile defense (BMD), along with 2011 East Japan earthquake disaster relief operations, rapidly promoted bilateral, operational coordination. However, most of the JSDF still could not provide a wide range of missions.

Assessment: Changes in the Strategic Environment

Today's strategic environment is replete with continuing and expanding threats². Many regional conflicts occurred in the 1990s, similar to the Iraq and Afghan wars that followed 2001 international terrorist activities. In the 2010s, a rising China and resurgent Russia constituted the third security wave in the post-Cold War era,³ as international power

² Gaddis, John Lewis. "Toward the Post-Cold War World." *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1991)

³ Defense Strategy Committee Report. *2010–nendai no Kokusaikankyo to Nippon no Anzenhosyo*. National Institute of Defense Studies. 4.

politics began to move rapidly toward multi-polarization. Certainly, the largest transition in the Indo-Pacific security environment relates to China's rise. China's apparent political intention to be the strongest regional power and its rapidly expanding anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities cause serious concerns in this region. The second greatest concern has been over North Korean nuclear aspirations, demonstrated by its multiple ballistic missile firing tests. Finally, the third major concern is the revival of Russian power, including military activities in the Far East. Russia steadily promotes reforms to strengthen its armed forces, and its political intention to be an ambitious polar power, thereby changing U.S. power, threatens instability in this region.⁴

Over this same period, Japan's relative national power has definitely declined. Beginning in 1968, Japan had the second largest gross domestic product (GDP) of any country, until it was surpassed by China in 2010. Due, in part, to economic stagnation over the past twenty years, Japan's sovereign debt stands at 200 percent of its GDP. However, despite these financial constraints, the Abe administration has initiated reforms to enhance Japanese national security. First, Japan's National Security Council was established in 2013. Second, the new National Security Strategy was published, in addition to a revision of the Defense Program Outline and the Mid-term Defense Build-up Program. Furthermore, the Abe administration changed the official interpretation of the Japanese constitution to permit collective self-defense, and passed the requisite legislation in 2015. All these reforms had been politically impossible for the previous seventy years. By finally undertaking them, Japanese security reached a major turning point.⁵

Prediction: Future Roles of the JSDF

The first Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation were established in 1978. They covered only the beginning of U.S.-Japan joint exercises and training and U.S.-Japan bilateral studies. The second Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation in 1997 stepped up cooperation to prepare for U.S.-Japan joint operations in future contingencies on the Korean Peninsula. But there were many restrictions—the JSDF was limited to a logistical and rear-area support role—due to Japan's interpretation of collective self-defense at the time. The third Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation of 2015 sharply expanded the roles of the JSDF. For example, it may now play any roles in the South China Sea, on the Korean Peninsula, and in the areas of cyber and space.

⁴ The U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter pointed out in testimony to the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee on March 17, 2016 that the United States should be more concerned about revival of Russia.

⁵ If contingencies occur on the Korean Peninsula in the near future, the JSDF will conduct at least non-combatant evacuation operations, which will be the first such action in Japan's post-World War II history.

The U.S. Department of Defense's Third Offset Strategy appears to orient the long-term national security strategy of the U.S. toward "dealing with fiscal issues while rebuilding an offensive strategy centered on force projection capability (in the form of nuclear-deterrent and global-strike capabilities) to maintain military superiority."⁶ Japan, as an allied partner, certainly needs to stay attuned to any changes in U.S. strategy, due to the JSDF's growing role-sharing in the U.S.–Japan alliance. In other words, the United States is clearly aware of the need to recover military superiority in the Indo-Pacific region. The U.S. core military strength, resting on its nuclear capability, is its ability to project power globally. Although the roles of the JSDF, as a deterrent power, have basically not changed, its missions could shift toward developing greater military effectiveness, as part of the process of the United States flexing its regional military muscle.

In this context, the National Defense Program Outline and the Mid-term Defense Build-up Program should be revised soon, because expanding the missions of the JSDF requires financial guarantees. From a short-term perspective, the JSDF should be required to prepare substantially for contingencies on the Korean Peninsula as one of its most urgent missions. Currently, international power politics have been rapidly moving toward multi-polarization. Under these uncertain circumstances, there are seriously concerning issues: rising China, resurgent Russia, unpredictable North Korea, and extremely unstable Middle East. As a result, roles of the JSDF, as a deterrent power, are still important and have expanded regionally and globally. More global peacekeeping operations were authorized in Japan's 2015 security reforms. The JSDF has also been given more global military responsibilities, and has to prepare for its future roles in the international arena.

Challenges: Future Agendas of Joint Operations

The JSDF resumed developing its joint operational capabilities under the revision of domestic laws in 2006.⁷ Joint operations have become key elements of all JSDF operations. However, the JSDF does not have a permanent joint task force or joint headquarters. The JSDF should establish a new command and control structure, including permanent joint headquarters, which would be able to effectively manage joint operations. The JSDF must also prepare joint doctrine, similar to that of foreign military organizations, to prepare for future contingencies.

⁶ In November 2014, then-U.S. Secretary of Defense Charles Timothy "Chuck" Hagel announced the concept of the Defense Innovation Initiative related to the Third Offset Strategy. He added that this concept should be sophisticated through developments of the Third Offset Strategy.

⁷ Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2015*, (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 2015), 408.

The final goal is combined operations between the U.S. Armed Forces and the JSDF, and both forces should be synchronized, although complete synchronization would be extremely difficult because of their different levels of operational readiness and weapons systems. However, the only way to conduct effective joint and combined operations is to plan and practice together, on a regular basis. Originally, the initial doctrines and training of the JGSDF, JMSDF, and JASDF were based on the doctrines and training of their corresponding American services in the 1950s. Service-to-service relationships persisted between the U.S. Armed Forces and the JSDF, which inhibited the development of joint doctrine in Japan. However, the joint operations of the U.S. Armed Forces demonstrated that both joint and combined capability can be developed. These experiences clearly indicate that it is not difficult to conduct combined operations between the U.S. Armed Forces and the JSDF. It simply requires effort from both parties.

Challenges: Future Agendas of the JGSDF

The JGSDF has to pay attention to the potential Chinese threat. Thus, in the mid-term, the focus of its missions should be shifted from the north to include southern and western islands defense and force protection for bases or camps, including U.S. bases in Japan. To conduct new missions in the future, the JGSDF should promote these critical agendas: establishment of the Ground Force Command Headquarters; reform of mobile divisions and brigades; establishment of an amphibious regiment, amphibious operational capabilities, and special forces' capabilities; and reform of the Ground Force Research Headquarters.⁸ Simultaneously, the JGSDF should seek out more robust peacekeeping operations.

The revision of the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation of 2015 will certainly expand and develop missions and capabilities for the JGSDF. In addition, Japan's new security legislation will affect the JGSDF's international activities. For instance, the JGSDF will protect foreign armed forces during their overseas missions. Therefore, the JGSDF has to prepare for new rules of engagement and new types of training. Sufficient education and training are the best way to have all-around operations capabilities in international activities. The JGSDF has to maintain at least a basic capability across the ground warfare spectrum. It does not mean to have major formations in entire areas, but it has to develop the research and development, the doctrine, and a basic maneuver unit to keep up with warfare development and be ready to deal with the very uncertain future.

⁸ Japan's Mid-term Defense Build-up Program of 2013 encouraged quick development of amphibious operations capabilities. The JGSDF procured the V-22 Osprey helicopter and AAV7 assault amphibious vehicle to develop its amphibious operations capabilities in fiscal year 2015.

Challenges: Future Agendas of the JMSDF

Currently, the JMSDF is tasked with responding, in concert, with the U.S. Navy to any armed attack or other hostile actions against Japan. Moreover, the relationship between the U.S. Navy and the JMSDF, as well as relationships with other countries' navies, effectively function to maintain maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region. Thus, a strong relationship between the U.S. Navy and the JMSDF becomes an asset not only for regional security but also for international security. Currently, the JMSDF is mainly responsible for sea-control, including anti-submarine warfare, anti-air warfare, and anti-surface warfare. Furthermore, the JMSDF should participate in international activities, such as anti-piracy campaigns in the Middle East and exercises aimed at fostering a favorable international security environment.

The United States' traditional deterrent power through the U.S. Navy is more necessary than ever. The U.S. Navy makes great efforts to conduct missions to support the United States' rebalancing policies, under severe financial constrain. In the short-term, the JMSDF missions with the U.S. Navy will encompass BMD, international counterterrorism, and continuous early-warning and surveillance in surrounding maritime waters.

Today, the U.S. Navy's assets are focused in the Indo-Pacific region in preparation for threats from reemerging traditional state actors. In other words, the U.S. Navy continues to serve as a lynchpin for peace and stability in this region. The JMSDF should conduct sea control missions with the U.S. Navy on every level: international, regional, and within Japan's territorial waters. There are indispensable tasks for the JMSDF to perform during peacetime and as contingency measures with integrated capabilities.

Challenges: Future Agendas of the JASDF

Historically, the day-to-day mission of the JASDF has consisted of peacetime scrambles against Russian and Chinese violations of Japan's territorial airspace. However, the changes in the international security environment discussed above make it necessary for the JASDF to reconsider its role and defense posture, during both peacetime and wartime. Its high level of activity to intercept probing Russian and Chinese aircraft has left few flying hours for more complex missions that would be required in future crises and combat. The rapid development of military technology makes the effectiveness of the JASDF's scrambles less certain. In the near future, the JASDF will be called upon to undertake more complex missions for which its pilots will be unprepared, since its missions, so far, have not required honed combat capabilities. For this reason, the JASDF must consider shifting its mission

focus from scrambles to all-around air operations, including air operations with cyber, space, and drone capabilities, even under continued financial constraint.

In the future, the missions of the JASDF will require highly qualified combat capabilities to counter the A2/AD threat from China. U.S.–Japan joint exercises and training are the best opportunities for the JASDF to rapidly develop its air power performance. High-intensity training can only be conducted in large air training areas that are not available in Japan. The JASDF should also continue to prepare for overseas deployment in Guam, Alaska, and Australia. The JASDF should promote procurement of manned aircraft with stealth, link, and situation awareness functions. Promotion of interoperability for joint U.S.–Japan air operations is critical to conducting missions in future contingencies. In the near future, JASDF missions will encompass BMD, international counterterrorism, and continuous early-warning and surveillance. However, the most important mission is to provide strong air superiority in any contingency, as a deterrent power, with high-performance air weapons systems.

Introduction

Since the end of World War II, a close alliance with the United States, spanning security, economy, and society, has been the key feature of Japan's foreign relations. Especially in the sixty-five years since the 1951 enactment of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan (U.S.–Japan Security Treaty), which serves as the basis of the two countries' security relations, Japan has sustained its alliance with the United States. Considering the alliance as a means to maximize the national interests of both partners, one can understand, in the case of U.S.–Japan relations, Japan's security has been guaranteed by the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty, while Japan has fulfilled the roles expected by the United States. This mutual support is evidenced through the relationship between the U.S. Armed Forces and the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), which is a core relationship within the alliance.¹ Indeed, efforts of the JSDF have contributed substantially to sustaining and expanding the alliance.² However, the significance of the JSDF's activities, both during and after the Cold War, as well as how those activities contributed to the alliance, remains unclear.

Aside from its domestic status, valuation, and recognition by the public, the JSDF is confident that it has been cooperating with the U.S. Armed Forces as a substantial military organization in the international arena, since the end of World War II. Unfortunately, most Japanese citizens do not recognize the significance of its past contributions. They see the recently revised domestic security legislation as a response to the current international security environment, and as a sudden reform by the government of Japan to meet political requirements. Considering this reality, this paper will reassess what roles the JSDF has played and how it has contributed to sustaining and expanding the U.S.–Japan alliance. This reassessment is based on discussions with three former JSDF senior officers, who are currently serving as national security researchers in the United States.

To provide an historical overview, we divide the international security environment into three timeframes: (1) the Cold War era (bipolar era), (2) the post-Cold War era (unipolar U.S. hegemony), and (3) the new era of international security (multipolar world). Seen from the current, panoramic U.S. perspective and the foreseeable future, the international security environment has been affected by changes in military power. As a result, various conflicts that the United States has experienced are now reemerging in

¹ Kubo, Fumiaki et al. *America nitotte Doumaitoba naika*. (Tokyo: Chuokoron-Shinsya, 2013). 9-17.

² Murata, Ryohei. *Dokoni ikunoka Konokuniha*. (Kyoto: Mineruba Shobo, 2010). 110.

different forms. In addressing this dynamic world, we examine the roles and missions shouldered by the JSDF as well as its future challenges under the U.S.-Japan alliance.

Conclusion of the U.S.– Japan Security Treaty and Establishment of the JSDF

Historical Overview of U.S.–Japan Security Relationships

Although Japan's modernization and diplomatic relations with the United States began with the arrival of Commodore Matthew C. Perry in 1853, the history of U.S.–Japan relations was marked by the collision of and cooperation over their national interests. The era in which Japan sought and secured overseas interests through military power ended with its defeat in World War II. Japan chose to reconstruct herself not only through strong military power but also through economic and technological development. The United States won World War II; however, in order to prepare to confront communism, it required support from Japan, which was geopolitically located at the forefront of the Cold War. At the same time, Japan depended on the United States with regard to security. With the Korean War, there was an even greater need for U.S. involvement in Japan's security affairs and for the establishment of the JSDF in order to ensure stable self-defense capability. Therefore, one can argue that the U.S.–Japan alliance was created out of mutual necessity. Furthermore, since the United States had complete faith that Japan would no longer pose a military threat, the nature of the treaty establishing the U.S.–Japan alliance was also influenced by Japan's status as a defeated nation.¹

The U.S.–Japan Security Treaty, concluded on September 8, 1951, included the expectation that the United States would gain increased defense capacity, while Japan would gain greater national security through a temporary U.S. presence in the nation. The first U.S.–Japan Security Treaty, which did not put the U.S. defense obligation over Japan in statutory form, was criticized as a one-size treaty; therefore, the Japanese government aimed to revise it. The second U.S.–Japan Security Treaty was signed on January 19, 1960, and it has been maintained for over sixty-five years. This revision clarified the relationship with the Charter of the United Nations, mandated prior consultation on U.S. Armed

¹ Kubo. *America nitotte Doumaitoba naika*. 44-45.

Forces deployments, and set a deadline of ten years on Japan's defense obligation. In short, it amended all the points that Japan had claimed were unequal. It was a politically realistic decision to limit Japan's duty to the provision of land and facilities, considering Japanese politics at that time.²

Essence of the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty

The U.S.–Japan Security Treaty stipulates that the U.S. may utilize land and facilities provided by Japan to support U.S. strategy, in exchange for military power for the security of Japan and the Far East region. In other words, the treaty is based on the Japanese government's promises to provide personnel, land, facilities, and “favors” to the United States in compensation for the United States protecting Japan. In this respect, given that the United States is capable of globally deploying its powerful military and that Japan has interests and defense capabilities that are limited within its own territory and periphery, we can regard the relationship as an asymmetric alliance.³ This asymmetric division of roles, which characterized the basic structure of the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty, remains active within the alliance, because the Cold War between Eastern and Western countries led to a relatively stable international environment and made it difficult to change the basic structure.

The United States has maintained peace and stability abroad by deploying its powerful military power, showing its deterrence force, or exercising its combat capabilities, when necessary. To put it differently, the United States must fulfill its obligation to extend the security umbrella over its allies, while Japan must fulfill its obligation to cooperate with the United States to the extent possible.

The U.S.–Japan Security Treaty will automatically lose its effect a year after either the United States or Japan decides to abandon it. From Japan's perspective, the treaty is indispensable to its independence and peace; therefore, it is necessary for Japan to make an effort to sustain relations. For the United States, the treaty was concluded in the context of a Cold War containment policy; thus, it offered a foothold where Japan played an important role as a breakwater in the Far East against the expansionist Soviet Union. Since Japan only needed U.S. help to deter and defend against a potential threat from the Soviet Union, the U.S.–Japan alliance functioned well, despite its asymmetry.

² Shinoda, Tomohito. *Emerging Realism of the Japan-U.S. Alliance*. (Tokyo: Chikura Shobo, 2007). 65-72, 86.

³ Hiwatari, Yumi. *Defending Strategy: Rethinking Japan's National Security*. (Kyoto: Mineruba Shobo, 2012).

In the post-Cold War era, the focus of the U.S.–Japan alliance changed drastically from counteracting a potential threat to maintaining the regional order and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.⁴ However, in reality, the activities of the JSDF were still severely limited under Japanese domestic laws. For example, those laws continued to restrict the geographical coverage of JSDF operations, in cooperation with the U.S. Armed Forces. In this respect, the recent changes in the interpretation of the Japanese constitution, along with enactment of legislation, to allow collective self-defense under severe international security conditions, fundamentally remedied the flaws in Japan's existing security-related laws, based on lessons learned from the past situations. These reforms hugely improved the asymmetric U.S.–Japan military relations, and signified a new, sound legal basis for the U.S.–Japan alliance to function. However, whether the alliance actually functions well, in reality, depends entirely on the efforts of both sides going forward.

Establishment of the JSDF

In 1950, with the outbreak of the Korean War, the United States announced the reexamination of its containment strategy (NSC68⁵) and urged Japan to establish its self-defense capability. The U.S. containment strategy during the early stage of the Cold War aimed at counter-plotting against the Soviet Union's expansionist intentions in a comprehensive manner, including through political, economic, psychological, and militaristic means. NSC68 also focused on evaluating the Soviet Union's military capability, and declared that the United States should contain Soviet expansionist policies at all costs and in any region. In order to carry out this containment strategy, Japan's remilitarization was indispensable. At the time, the government of Japan was prioritizing economic rehabilitation over remilitarization; however, then-Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida promised the United States that he would reinforce the National Police Reserve on the restoration of sovereignty in April 1952, reorganize it as a Police Reserve Force to carry out domestic police activities, and remilitarize Japan at some point in the future.

With the advent of the Eisenhower administration in 1953, the United States revisited its containment policy. This transition was marked by (1) increased dependence on nuclear deterrence, rather than conventional military power, to reduce the economic costs of the containment policy and (2) reinforcement of sea-air power in exchange for the reduction in ground forces. In the face of the new containment policy, the U.S. demand

⁴ The U.S.–Japan Security Declaration on April 1996 stated, primarily: (1) U.S.–Japan security cooperation is still important; (2) U.S.–Japan defense cooperation is not only for bilateral issues but also for regional and global issues; and (3) The Guidelines for Japan–U.S. Defense Cooperation in 1978 should be revised.

⁵ NSC68 was planned by U.S. State Department Policy Planning Chief Paul H. Nitze. John Lewis Gaddis explained the concept of NSC68 as a “symmetrical strategy.”

for Japan's remilitarization, which urged the reinforcement of Japan's ground forces, actually waned. In other words, considering the low probability of conflicts between ground forces, in the absence of direct invasion by Soviet Union, the United States decided to reduce the pressure on military buildup, which would have hindered Japan's political and economic stability, while rebalancing U.S. military forces in a step-by-step manner.⁶

From the U.S. perspective, the first U.S.–Japan Security Treaty clearly was a provisional arrangement, and it is not hard to imagine that the United States rushed to conclude the treaty, considering the situation in Japan where the influence of communism was growing and where there were no rights to exercise self-defense. Although the United States was repeatedly demanding Japan's remilitarization, even after restoration of its sovereignty, the government of Japan resisted the request and responded with the minimum requirement for defense buildup.⁷

As a result, the JGSDF was established as the National Police Reserve in 1950. The JMSDF was established as the Coastal Safety Force in 1952. The National Police Reserve was reorganized into the Police Reserve Force in 1952. And the JASDF was newly established on July 1, 1954, when the Japan Defense Agency and the national police and coastal forces were renamed the JGSDF and JMSDF, respectively.

In short, the unified military forces of the JSDF were established in response to the request for remilitarization under the U.S. containment strategy and, secondarily, in response to the outbreak of the Korean War. In this respect, the general structure and financing of the JSDF were developed as a way to resist the U.S. request for Japan's military buildup.⁸ The JSDF is recognized as an administrative organization, not a military organization, under Japanese domestic laws, regulations, and constitution. However, the Supreme Court of Japan recognizes the JSDF as a sovereign and organization to exercise Japan's right to self-defense, and it is therefore regarded as an armed force under international law. The clear difference between the JSDF and foreign armed forces is that the JSDF is bound by strict domestic laws to use its force for the purpose of self-defense.

⁶ Shinoda. *Emerging Realism*. 72.

⁷ Kyoto University professor Masataka Kosaka pointed out prime minister Shigeru Yoshida's guidelines, which maintained light armament and prioritized economic recovery, did not reflect normal policy, due to the serious situations in the post-World War II period. Prime Minister Yoshida believed that Japan should focus on its own economic recovery, without future remilitarization.

⁸ Sadou, Akihiro. *Jieitai Shiron: Sei kan Gun Min no 60 nen*. (January 2015). 22.

Roles of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF)

Establishment of the JGSDF and the Cold War Era

The guiding principle of Japan's demilitarization and democratization, imposed by General Headquarters of the Allied Forces (GHQ) in the early period of U.S. occupation, greatly influenced the founding of the JGSDF and Japan's national security policy. First, although the National Police Reserve is the predecessor of the JGSDF, the Order for National Police Reserve states that, "National Police Reserve is founded to maintain our peace and orders and to supplement the national, local, and community constabulary force (Article 1), and operates based on the order by the Prime Minister in an occasion when security enforcement is especially needed (Article 3)."¹ In other words, the National Police Reserve was a supplementary organization for the police department, not meant to operate as an army. Therefore, its primary mission was not to deal with an armed attack by foreign countries, but to maintain public order domestically.

Second, in conformity with the GHQ's principle of demilitarization, the National Police Reserve divisions were dominated by bureaucrats from the former Home Ministry Office, and former Imperial Army and Navy personnel were intentionally excluded. As a result, "civil control," as opposed to "civilian control," was established and came to hugely influence Japan's defense policies over time.

Third, the National Police Reserve was founded by dissolving all relations with and connections to the former Imperial Army of Japan. For instance, it excluded the strategies, tactics and training methods of the former Imperial Army² and did not recruit military personnel for its officer-level positions. Therefore, training was conducted under the order of the Civil Policy Bureau of Supreme Command and directed by Civil Policy Bureau officers dispatched to respective camp sites.³ In addition, the teaching method

¹ National Police Reserve Command. *Keisatsuyobitai Soutaishi*. 3.

² Later, 3,000 graduates from the 74th class of the Imperial Naval Academy and the 58th class of the Imperial Army Academy were assigned as National Police Reserve officers on October 30, 1950. Additional recruits were called up from the 54th – 57th classes of the Imperial Army Academy.

³ National Police Reserve Command. *op.cit.* 22.

explicating U.S. strategies, fighting tactics, and technical manuals were translated into Japanese and used for training. This is a clear distinction with the JMSDF, which intentionally succeeded the former Imperial Navy, much as the German Army evolved after World War II, when it upheld its strategies, fighting tactics, history, and traditions, and placed responsibility for the war and Germany's defeat on Adolf Hitler alone.

The JGSDF faithfully inherited the U.S. traditions of “commanders’ decision-making process in assessing the situation” and “principles of commanders’ and staffs’ activities,” and continues them to this day. However, when it comes to operations, it differs from the JMSDF, whose strategies and operations are closely related to the U.S. Navy. While the U.S. Army has frequently participated in wars, since the Korean War, and has developed its processes and strategies in the course of those wars, the JGSDF has not engaged in operations abroad. However, the JGSDF recently started learning U.S. strategies and tactics through joint training and operations with the U.S. Marines, in order to enhance its defense capability around the southern and western islands.

Although the original mission of the JGSDF, like that of the National Police Reserve, was to maintain domestic safety, that mission was transformed by the establishment of the 1957 “Basic Policy for National Defense.” That policy defined the objective of national defense as “prevent direct and indirect aggression, but once invaded, repel[ling] such aggression.” In other words, the new objective of preventing and repelling direct invasion was added to the original mission of domestic safety. In this way, the mission of the entire JSDF also came to include prevention and reaction against both direct and indirect aggression.

Since the establishment of the Basic Policy for National Defense, the JGSDF has regarded “defense of mainland Japan” as its primary mission. The policy also stated that Japan would build up limited self-defense capabilities, step by step, in accordance with rational national power, and it would deal with external aggression, including invasion, based on the arrangements laid out in the U.S.–Japan security alliance. From the perspective of the U.S.–Japan alliance, it is important to note that the two countries divided the responsibilities of shield and spear, with the JGSDF playing the role of shield.

Over the years, the roles and missions of the JGSDF have been gradually changing. To explicate these changes, it is helpful to divide the seventy years of the post-World War II era into three periods, while relating them to the U.S.–Japan alliance.

In the bipolar world centering on the United States and Soviet Union, identification of friend or foe was clear, and Japan's presumptive enemy was the Soviet Union. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the JGSDF conducted missions by focusing on how to prevent an invasion by the Soviet Union Armed Forces and how to deal with an invasion if such preventive efforts failed. According to Japan's second, five-year Defense Build-up Program, the JGSDF would respond only to localized warfare and

only with conventional weapons,⁴ and to fulfill this directive, the JGSDF deployed 13 divisions with 180,000 personnel. However, this Mid-term Defense Build-up Program did not assume that Japan would mount an autonomous national defense in the face of a fragile U.S.–Japan alliance. Rather, it became clear that the plan was grounded in a strong U.S.–Japan alliance based on the Basic Policy for National Defense, indicating that the United States would be the protagonist in securing Japan’s defense.⁵ This concept of the JGSDF conducting missions in only localized warfare was derived mainly for the dual purposes of easing financial constraints and restricting the autonomy of uniformed personnel. Unfortunately, the frustration among uniformed personnel over their extremely limited roles would persist for many years.

The JGSDF, during the Cold War era, adopted a forward deployment strategy for the northern sector of Japan⁶ and upgraded its defense capability to counter the Soviet Union Armed Forces’ amphibious operations (including amphibious landing, airborne, and heliborn operations). The JGSDF intensively deployed heavily armored divisions with tanks and long-range artillery on the island of Hokkaido and repeatedly conducted training targeting Soviet Union amphibious operations. Although a number of people, in retrospect, regard the Cold War environment as a stable, bipolar world, the Soviet Union, in reality, was a major threat, especially with respect to its possible invasion of Hokkaido. This is why the JGSDF developed a plan to prepare for the potential invasion and repeatedly conducted training. It was also clear from the Cuban Missile Crisis, when the United States and Soviet Union came to the brink of war, that the idea of a stable, bipolar world did not reflect reality.

The focus of the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation, signed in the midst of the Cold War, was on how the United States and Japan could cooperate to deal with a possible Soviet invasion into Japan. Based on the guidelines, Japan-U.S. joint exercises and training were initiated in the form of communication training in October 1981 and joint operations training in February 1982. The exercises later developed into more practical and full-scale activities.

⁴ The second Mid-term Defense Build-up Program, July 18, 1961.

⁵ Sadou. *Jieitai Shiron: Sei kan Gun Min no 60 nen.* 101.

⁶ The JGSDF forward deployment strategy toward the northern sector of Japan was mainly against the Soviet Union Armed Forces’ ocean fortress strategy, which aimed to strengthen the Soviet military presence in the Baltic Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk. The JSDF focused on defense of Hokkaido, and the JGSDF deployed heavily armored divisions to Hokkaido to counter Soviet Union Armed Forces’ amphibious attacks.

End of the Cold War Era to the Bush Administration

The collapse of the Cold War in 1989 was a shock for the JGSDF. Ironically, the Soviet Union broke up in the same year that the JGSDF completed its large-scale deployment to Hokkaido, which included relocating some divisions from mainland Japan.⁷ With the loss of its assumed enemy, the JGSDF lost its direction, for a time, in its defense build-up. For instance, the goal of developing “an ability to repel an enemy’s invasion through landing” still remained in the Mid-term Defense Buildup Program, formulated in December 1990, one year after the end of the Cold War. By contrast, the U.S. Army’s change in direction after the Cold War was quick. Its interest shifted from High Intensity Conflict (HIC) to Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), and it rushed to organize Special Operations Forces (SOF) to support Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). It was difficult to comprehend the purpose behind this move at that time, but it later turned out to be prescient.

Influenced by the U.S. Army, the JSDF, especially the JGSDF, also focused on MOOTW. Although the JSDF’s main activities were still limited to disaster relief and peacekeeping, the role of the JGSDF was shifting in emphasis from “acts as deterrence just by its existence” to “operate on the ground.” To begin with, the number of large-scale disaster relief missions increased, including responses to the Mt. Unzen-Fugen disaster in 1991, the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995, the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway system in 1995, bird flu in 2004, the Niigata Chuetsu earthquake in 2004, and the earthquake in the Indian Ocean off Sumatra in 2005. In particular, the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake was an unprecedented national disaster that left more than six-thousand dead and forty-thousand injured. The dedicated operations of the JSDF strongly impressed the general public and greatly enhanced its reputation throughout Japan. In fact, prior to the disaster, there had been violations of human rights against JSDF officials, with some being refused admission to universities; however, their situation improved after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake.

In addition, the JSDF started participating in international peacekeeping activities. After the enactment of the 1992 Act on Cooperation for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations, the JSDF joined peace-related operations with the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), UN Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET), and UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), and received recognition by the international community for its sophisticated techniques and high morale.

⁷ Sano, Akira. *Rikuzyojieitai no Unyoukousou to Hensei no Henka*. PANZER. (January 2004).

While MOOTW was in the spotlight, the development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by North Korea also caught the attention of Japan and the United States, and led to the revision of the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation in 1997 and the enactment of the Act Concerning Measures for Peace and Safety of Japan in Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan in 1999. In this way, the cooperation between the United States and Japan on issues surrounding Japan, such as North Korea's nuclear development, SOF activities, and conflicts in the Taiwan straits, were further emphasized.

The largest incident around this time was the terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, when U.S. President George Bush launched the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars with the support of the international community. However, the Iraq War raised questions among U.S. allies. While Germany, France, Canada, Russia, and China objected to the engagement, Japan responded to the United States' strong requests for help by enacting the Act on Special Measures Concerning Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq and conducted reconstruction operations in Iraq. This was the JGSDF's first experience joining multinational forces to conduct missions outside of Japan. More importantly, this reconstruction assistance in Iraq, which included actions related to defense and emergency evacuation, raised questions about whether Japan's use of its forces was justifiable and legal. Such questions were later resolved by the enactment of security bills in 2015. Reflecting back, Japan faced a difficult dilemma over how it should maintain relations with the United States when this key ally was unilaterally trapped in an unpopular war.

The Obama Administration to Present

Since the election of President Barack Obama, the world system has become more multipolar, with the core countries being the United States, China, Russia, the members of the European Union, and India. In this environment, the United States has experienced relative decline in national power—as indicated by Obama's remark that, “the U.S. is no longer the world's policeman”—and China has emerged as the world's number two state, with its increasing wealth and military power. With the rise of China, the government of Japan issued the National Defense Program Outline of 2010, which calls for enhanced defense capability in the southern and western islands. However, the term “dynamic defense forces,” introduced in the National Defense Program Outline of 2010 under the Democratic Party of Japan, was never clearly defined.

Additionally, the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, which also occurred during a Democratic Party administration, demonstrated the efficiency and efficacy of the JSDF to the international community. During the catastrophe—which included a tsunami, earthquake, and nuclear power plant accident—the joint task forces, led by the JGSDF's North Eastern Army Command, were formed and conducted joint

operations for the first time. The JGSDF learned many lessons from these operations for possible future disasters, which could include a Tokyo epicentral earthquake and a Great Nankai Trough earthquake.

It is important to note that the second Abe Administration, formed in 2012, established the National Security Council (NSC), the National Security Strategy, and the National Defense Program Outline in a timely and efficient manner. Based on the National Security Strategy and the National Defense Program Outline finalized in 2013, the JSDF became the dynamic joint defense forces capable of meeting new and diverse situations, such as a possible full-scale invasion, attacks by guerilla and special operations forces, invasions into territorial islands, large-scale disasters, and the betterment of the international security environment.⁸ In this era of multi-polarity, preparing for a potential invasion into territorial islands, including the Senkaku Islands, becomes more important, since there is a growing possibility of localized conflict with conventional weapons, as suggested by Chinese military strategies.

In addition, the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation revised in April 2015 represented a particularly significant deal in determining the future of the U.S.–Japan alliance, given that their focal points were: (1) how to deal with the dramatic rise of China (the guidelines do not mention China by name, but China was clearly the main driver) and (2) how Japan is going to cooperate with the United States to maintain peace and stability. The fact that the 2015 guidelines bolstered the alliance was valuable from the perspective of deterrence. Needless to say, the enactment of the security bills in October 2015 was a historical achievement that allowed partial exercise of the right of collective self-defense and provided the legal basis for Japan to contribute to international community missions. With this change in roles, the JSDF, especially the JGSDF, will be tested, due to the possibility of UN peacekeeping operations that are more severe and demanding than ever before.

⁸ The National Security Strategy and the current National Defense Program Outline were both approved by the Cabinet on December 17, 2013.

Roles of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF)

Establishment of the JMSDF and the Cold War Era

Compared to the establishment of the JGSDF, the JMSDF has intentionally adopted the traditions of its predecessor, the Imperial Navy. To understand this distinction, we must return to the Ministry of the Navy on the day the Pacific War ended, August 15, 1945. On that day, then-Minister of the Imperial Navy Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai called Rear Admiral Yoshio Yamamoto, director-general of the Military Bureau of the Ministry of the Navy, to his office and entrusted him with three responsibilities that became known as “Yonai’s Will.” The first was to rebuild Japan’s Navy; the second was to use the Navy’s skills to develop a “new Japan;” and the third was to hand over the good traditions of the Imperial Navy. This directive signaled the beginning of a renewed Japanese Navy on the same day that the Imperial Navy ceased to exist. It also meant that the JMSDF inherited the strengths of the Imperial Navy—its tradition and substance—as the basis for the new organization, and thereby ensured continuity with the Imperial Navy.

However, in all probability, Admiral Yonai and other officers in the Imperial Navy could not have imagined the current, major role of the U.S. Navy that fought and defeated them.¹ The JMSDF’s relationship with the U.S. Navy surpassed the relationships that the other branches had with their U.S. military counterparts, even though the JGSDF was trained by the U.S. Army based on U.S. military doctrine, drilling, and teaching methods, and the JASDF was equipped and trained by the U.S. Air Force. Compared to those other two branches, the JMSDF had a remarkably “close and proactively cooperative

¹ According to the book, *The Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Force, 1945–71*, written in the 1970s by James Auer, a graduate student in the Fletcher School at Tufts University, who later became director of the Japan desk in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and retired as a U.S. Navy commander, “Rear Admiral Yamamoto, Admiral Katsunoshin Yamanashi, Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura, and the U.S. Navy’s Rear Admiral Arleigh Burke, who later became an Admiral and Chief of Naval Operations, greatly contributed to the rebuilding of the JMSDF.”

relationship”² with the U.S. Armed Forces at the strategic and operational levels, and both its “continuity with the Imperial Navy” and its “similarities with the U.S. Navy” are the JMSDF’s *raison d’être*.

Consequently, the roles and missions that the JMSDF has shouldered have been based not only on the security and defense strategy of Japan, but also on U.S. naval strategy and the U.S. National Security Strategy on which the naval strategy is premised. One mission that is emblematic of the JMSDF’s *raison d’être* is minesweeping. Due to the tactics of both the Japanese Navy and the U.S. militaries to win the Pacific War, the number of underwater mines placed around Japan numbered about sixty-thousand. At the time of Japan’s defeat, the roles of the navies changed to the peacetime goal of opening the sea lanes of communication in order to ensure safe passage of recovery goods, including daily necessities for the Japanese people. But the danger of minesweeping persisted. The government offices with jurisdiction over minesweeping were transferred from the Ministry of the Navy and the second Ministry of Demobilization to the Japan Coast Guard and the Coastal Safety Force, but the actual work of opening the sea lanes was consistently implemented using the advanced skills of the men of the Imperial Navy and then taken over by their successors, the personnel of the JMSDF. With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the year before the establishment of the JMSDF, the Japan Coast Guard Special Minesweeping Unit was formed at the urgent request of the United States. This unit was involved in minesweeping along the coast of the Korean Peninsula, and although it successfully removed twenty-eight mines, the work resulted in nineteen casualties, including one death.³

The circumstances surrounding these joint operations between the United States and Japan—in the era before the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty was signed and before the JSDF was established—was not made known to the people of Japan for a long time, even after the domestic political situation changed.⁴ At the same time, combined with other trends that encouraged rearmament, Japan’s minesweeping unit won the trust of the United States and the U.S. Navy, in particular, leading to even further promotion of rearmament by those from the former Japanese Imperial Navy who wanted to make Yonai’s Will a reality and from those in the U.S. Navy who favored rebuilding Japan’s naval capability.⁵

² Agawa, Naoyuki. *Friendship of the Sea*. (Kyoto: Chuko Shinsho, 2001). 25.

³ According to Narushige Michishita’s “Sea Power,” from October to December 1950, minesweeping operations at Incheon and other spots were conducted by 1,204 former Imperial Naval personnel with 37 minesweeper vessels.

⁴ Agawa, 20. “Nevertheless, although Japan renounced wars under the Japanese constitution and did not possess a military organization, it actually joined military operations. This fact remained for many years.”

⁵ *Ibid.* Chapter 5.

Within this context, when the Coastal Safety Force was inaugurated, the JMSDF was founded with 15,808 personnel and a total fleet displacement of 68,000 tons, made up primarily of 40 minesweeping ships from the former navy, 18 patrol frigates, and 50 Landing Ship Support, Large (LSSL) vessels loaned by the U.S. Navy. Although this was a “resurrected Japanese Navy” in accordance with Yonai’s Will, it was no more than the scale of a coastal navy, and its missions were simply to protect sea lanes, minesweep, defend the coasts, and safeguard Japan’s critical ports. Naturally, Yonai’s loyal successors concentrated their efforts on rebuilding the “blue-water navy,” in Yonai’s words.⁶ Under the National Defense Program Outline, created as part of the post-war security policy, “lightly armored Japan focused on the economy” and “dependence on the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty” were top priorities. From the Japanese perspective, Japan wanted to demonstrate its defense capability to the United States.

Specifically, during the gradual withdrawal of U.S. Army ground forces from Japan, the improvement of the JGSDF was emphasized, a tentative approach that grew out of a domestic policy encouraging the withdrawal of U.S. forces. Additionally, limiting the missions of the JMSDF to coastal defense and minesweeping became firmly entrenched in the Internal Bureau, Defense Agency.⁷ Further, because the strategies of nuclear deterrence and containment under the bipolar competition between the United States and the Soviet Union assumed that Europe would be their likely battlefield, and because the Soviet Navy was concentrated near Europe, the United States had to consider expanding U.S. Naval task forces into the North Atlantic.

Due to these domestic and international circumstances, allocating resources to the JMSDF was a low priority during the 1960s. Although the scale of naval vessels in the Defense Build-up Program drafted in 1955 included 150,000-ton vessels, this draft was not officially adopted by the government of Japan. In addition, although the Second Defense Build-up Program proposed the introduction of an approximately 11,000-ton anti-submarine helicopter carrier that could carry 18 helicopters, the bill was rejected for

⁶ Sadou. 99. According to “The Required Defense Capability of Japan on March 1955, Joint Staff Council,” the JSDF’s main missions were to defend mainland Japan against any invasion. The JGSDF was assigned to defeat a ground forces invasion, and the JASDF was assigned to defend Japan’s territorial airspace. However, the MSDF was not assigned to defend against a naval forces invasion. It was assigned only for minesweeping, channel protection, coastal guarding, and protection of sea lanes. The coverage for protecting sea lanes of communication was designated up to Hawaii and Singapore.

⁷ Ibid. 26. A leader of the opposition, Osamu Kaibara, entered the Interior Office in 1939 and became one of the founders of the JSDF.

financial reasons, strong opposition from the Internal Bureau, and lack of budgetary support from the United States.⁸

In the second half of the 1960s, as the United States shifted from a massive retaliation strategy to a flexible response strategy, and as the military balance between the United States and the Soviet Union moved away from U.S. superiority and towards equilibrium, the Soviet Navy gradually expanded into the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In 1970, the Soviet Union carried out its Exercise Okean (Ocean) on a global scale for the first time and began showing its intention to destroy sea lanes of communication in the Western Pacific. In response, a large-scale force from the U.S. Pacific Fleet held various military exercises that extended all the way to Guam. Recognizing this change in the environment, Japan revised the equipment and organization of the JMSDF in the Third Defense Build-up Program “in order to improve the defensive capabilities and the ability to ensure the safety of the sea lanes of communications in the surrounding seas of Japan,” and to enable open sea, anti-submarine missions, such as convoy escorts. At the same time, with the JMSDF’s new capabilities, the concept of rapid deployment of U.S. task forces centered around the Seventh Fleet, as well as the first joint Japan-U.S. operations, were developed for a crisis in the Far East.⁹

On the other hand, although the Director General of the Defense Agency, Yasuhiro Nakasone, took the lead in 1971 and announced the concept of a ten-year plan to improve Japan’s defense capabilities to the “necessary defensive strength,” which had been the long-held aspiration of the uniformed members of the JSDF, a number of incidents intervened. —These included détente between the United States and the Soviet Union in the second half of the 1960s; increased mistrust of the United States after the “Nixon shock” of 1971 (economic measures by then-U.S. president Richard Nixon, including cancelling the international convertibility of the U.S. dollar to gold), and the worsening of national sentiment towards the JSDF, due to the All Nippon Airway Flight 58 incident in 1971 (the collision of a JASDF jet fighter with a commercial airliner that killed all passengers, save for the fighter pilot). The Fourth Defense Build-up Program was decided after major revisions, but after the oil shock that followed, the program was cut further, and Japan ended up following the improvement policy from the Third Defense Build-up Program.

⁸ Ibid. 126. This draft was generally approved by Defense Agency Director General Akagi Munenori; however, it was later cancelled due to strong opposition from then-Director General of the National Defense Council, Osamu Kaibara and others.

⁹ Vice Minister Nishihiro pointed out that the purpose of the Third Defense Build-up Program was to provide a platform in the Far East region for rapid deployment of the U.S. Armed Forces. This included preparing for U.S. bases in Japan, protecting sea lanes of communication, and reducing enemy submarines’ activities in the surrounding Sea of Japan.

After the JSDF's ambitions for "necessary defensive strength"¹⁰ reached a deadlock, the bureaucrats, mainly from the Internal Bureau of the Defense Agency, came up with a new concept, called "fundamental defensive capabilities," which are the opposite of "necessary defensive capabilities."¹¹ The concept was for the defense capabilities during peacetime to be able to deal with supposed threats in a "local war by limited, small scale forces." In other words, the idea of "fundamental defensive capabilities," which, at its heart, involves the defense of mainland Japan, is completely different from "sufficient defense capabilities for denial." Because the National Defense Program Outline developed by the Cabinet in 1976, was drawn up based on this thinking, the JMSDF, which had been aiming for a blue water navy, recognized this as a conceptual step back. However, in the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation of 1978, which were being considered almost simultaneously with the Outline,¹² the nature of U.S.-Japan defense cooperation was debated. It was agreed that the JSDF and U.S. Navy cooperation would not be limited to the defense of Japan's mainland, but that the two would also aim to protect the sea lanes of communication.

Armed with this policy foundation—although an inadequate one—the JMSDF completed the Fourth Defense Build-up Plan in 1980. After 1980, the JMSDF possessed the ability to conduct real joint operations with the U.S. Navy. It focused its efforts on the defensive equipment, training, and education needed to search for, detect, and destroy Soviet nuclear-powered attack submarines—the biggest threat to the US Seventh Fleet, which would provide assistance during a crisis in the waters around Japan—and to remove undersea mines that the Soviets might construct to prevent U.S. Armed Forces from approaching. In other words, as a result of "creating strong maritime defense capabilities," based on the assumption of collaboration with the U.S. Navy, the JMSDF came to constitute an important component of the theater war strategies.¹³ Containment came to mean almost the same thing as the defense of Japan, in addition to the maintenance of order in the areas surrounding Japan. Put another way, during the Cold War era, the three security objectives of (1) defending Japan, (2) stabilizing the areas surrounding Japan, and (3) preserving the world order were all in accord.

¹⁰ The concept of "fundamental defensive capabilities" was originally proposed by Director General of Defense Bureau Takuya Kubo.

¹¹ Sado, 133. Kubo's proposal was criticized by uniformed officers because it was not realistic based on no-threat theory and quick expansion theory. In fact, the concept of fundamental defense capability was based on the theory of permanent defense capabilities.

¹² Ibid. 134. The National Defense Program Outline was initiated by members of the Defense Agency, and the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation were initiated by Director of Defense Bureau Takashi Maruyama.

¹³ Kitaoka, Shinichi. *Nippon no Anzenbosyo: Reisengo 10 nen no Shitenkara. Foreign Affairs Forum*, Special edition (November 1999): 22.

End of the Cold War Era to the Bush Administration

With the dissolution of the bipolar system, due to the victory of liberalism brought about by the end of the Cold War, the “harmony of the three objectives,” noted above, — that had supported Japan’s security were largely dissolved. Post-Cold War, Japan’s security policy and defense legislation faced an era of “unstable peace” and a transformation in accordance with the “principle of reacting to conditions.”¹⁴

We can divide this transformation into three stages. The first started with the 1990 Persian Gulf crisis and war. The United States requested that Japan dispatch minesweepers, but the Kaifu Administration responded by providing financial assistance to the coalition forces in the total amount of \$13 billion.¹⁵ In spite of the fact that the area was of extreme importance to Japan, and that a direct challenge to the post-Cold War international order had occurred, Japan was unable to play much of a role, outside of providing funding.

When the combat had barely finished, Japan dispatched a minesweeping task force (four minesweepers, one mine-countermeasures support ship, one replenishment oiler, and five-hundred personnel) to remove the underwater mines that Iraq had built in the Persian Gulf to prevent the landing of the coalition forces.¹⁶ Although the arrival of Japan’s minesweeping task force was welcome by the navies of the countries that had arrived first, the waters assigned to the JMSDF were in areas where operations were the most difficult. When political difficulties forced the Western European Union naval task force to return home, the JMSDF continued to work with the U.S. Navy and accomplished its mission in the dangerous waters.

On the JMSDF’s first overseas missions, it produced results and learned lessons not only by taking part in joint activities with the U.S. Navy but also, within the framework of multinational coordination, by executing minesweeping operations with nine countries and approximately forty vessels. However, the government’s responses were “too little, too late,” and the characterization of Japan’s international contributions as “checkbook diplomacy” resulted in intense criticism (“Gulf War trauma”). As a result, the opinion that “Japan must at least take part in international peacekeeping operations” gained momentum, and in 1992, the International Peace Cooperation Law was enacted, and Japan joined the peacekeeping operations in Cambodia. In the post-Cold War environment of an “unstable

¹⁴ Ibid. 22-25.

¹⁵ Ibid. 291-292.

¹⁶ This dispatch was authorized by article 99 of the Self-Defense Forces law stipulating that the JSDF could conduct minesweeping missions around Japan to remove armored mines that had been set by U.S. Armed Forces during World War II.

peace,” although Japan’s defense legislation and JSDF activities in the field of “preserving global order” were inadequate, they established precedents.

The second stage of this transformation started because of the North Korea crisis in 1994. The crisis resulted from suspicions about North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons and became extremely tense. The international community, led by the United States, moved to invoke economic sanctions against North Korea, to which North Korea hinted it would respond with war. Japan’s security system at the time was virtually unprepared to deal with this kind of threat, which, compared to the Persian Gulf crisis, was a more direct threat to the country. No specific preparations had been completed to deal with a crisis on the Korean Peninsula (such as the rescue of overseas Japanese citizens and a surge of refugees), support to the United States in military conflicts, or operations for a sea embargo that would accompany economic sanctions by the United Nations. From then on, the crisis on the Korean Peninsula emerged as a grave problem for Japan’s security.¹⁷

In response to the North Korea issue and to define what the post-Cold War U.S.–Japan security treaty should look like, the two countries drew up the New Guidelines for Japan–U.S. Defense Cooperation, based on the 1996 Japan–U.S. Joint Declaration on Security and the review from 1996 to 1998 of the Guidelines for Japan–U.S. Defense Cooperation. Further, Japan passed the Act Concerning the Measures for Peace and Safety of Japan in Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan, and the two countries amended their Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement. In other words, the two nations pursued the second of the three objectives, improving the security system for stabilizing the areas surrounding Japan.

The third stage of the transformation was sparked by North Korea’s August 1998 launch of a Taepodong long-range missile and the discovery of two suspected spy boats from North Korea off the coast of the Noto Peninsula in March 1999. In the process of responding, Japan realized that threats characteristic of the post-Cold War world, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or unconventional wars involving terrorism and guerrilla forces, were actually important to Japan’s security. Japan’s response exposed the fact that its security system was inadequate to deal with such threats, and became an opportunity to speed up the so-called emergency bill (contingencies response bill) that had been an outstanding issue for many years, since the founding of the Defense Agency and the JSDF. In other words, the third of the three objectives, improving the system for defending Japan, had finally proceeded.

It would seem to be common sense that a country would address its national security objectives in a way that prioritizes threats to the safety of one’s country—that is,

¹⁷ Tanaka, Akihiko. *Anzenbosyo: Sengo 50 nen no Mosaku*. (Tokyo: Yomiuri-shimbun, 1997). 194.

first, threats to one's own country; second, threats to the surrounding areas; and third, threats to the world. However, Japan's security systems improvements proceeded in the opposite direction: first, the world; second, the areas surrounding Japan; and third, Japan itself. Roughly ten years after the end of the Cold War, Japan's security policy evidenced no clear recognition of the new, post-Cold War world order, no way to move in the direction of that order, and no intention to become proactively involved in the formation of that order. In effect, Japan produced a policy of passive pacifism.

In the meantime, the JMSDF was dispatched to be part of the minesweeping task force in the Persian Gulf in 1991, to support the Cambodia peacekeeping operation in 1992, and to form a transportation unit for the international relief efforts that followed the earthquake in Turkey in 1999. Also in 1999, for the first time since its inception, the JMSDF was ordered to perform a maritime police action by escorting vessels and P-3C patrol aircraft engaged in various activities to deal with suspected spy ships off the coast of the Noto Peninsula. Unlike the activities during the Cold War, which were intended to improve Japan's operational capabilities through joint action with the United States and, thereby, to increase deterrence, these activities, like those of JGSDF, were mainly Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). Times had really shifted from "an era of building the JSDF, to one in which the JSDF actually operated."¹⁸

In the middle of this transformation, simultaneous terror attacks occurred in the United States. On September 11, 2001, hubs of the mainland United States—New York and Washington, DC—were attacked by fewer than twenty Islamic extremists who hijacked commercial airplanes and flew them into the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon (one crashed in a field in Pennsylvania), killing over three-thousand people. President Bush called this a "new war" and "the first war of the twenty-first century," and promising that the American people were behind him, immediately prepared for military action. NATO members declared that this act of terrorism "was an attack on all nineteen member nations" and indicated their willingness to cooperate with the United States, including on intelligence. In addition, within a week of the attacks, the Koizumi Administration announced "seven measures," such as information gathering and medical and transportation assistance for U.S. Armed Forces.¹⁹

In November, influenced by the U.S.-led coalition's attacks in Afghanistan and the adoption of UN Resolution 1368, the government of Japan specifically considered the limits of what Japan could do within the boundaries of its constitution. That is, it considered what cooperation would entail, and whether a response based on the Act

¹⁸ Prime Minister Obuchi stated at the 35th JSDF Senior Officers' Conference that circumstances for the JSDF had clearly shifted from invisible efforts only for procurement of equipment to visible efforts for actual implementation of missions.

¹⁹ Iokibe, Makoto, et al. *History of Japan-U.S. Relations*, (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 2009). 311.

Concerning the Measures for Peace and Safety of Japan in Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan or the Act Concerning Cooperation for United Nations Peace-Keeping Operations and Other Operations, prepared after the Cold War, would be appropriate. The government reached the conclusion that it would be difficult to respond under existing laws, and on November 5th the Cabinet submitted the Act on Special Measures against Terrorism to the Diet, and won adoption on November 29th. With great speed, the law was passed in twenty-seven days, after sixty-two hours of deliberation.²⁰ Based on this law, a task force of five JMSDF ships was dispatched and began supply activities in the Indian Ocean, starting on December 2nd.

The new war caused by international terrorists was a situation that even the United States had not predicted, and that challenged the assumptions behind Japan's post-Cold War security policy. As explained above, from the end of the Cold War, Japan's security policy review process was prioritized around the goals of preserving the international order, stabilizing the areas surrounding Japan and guaranteeing the security of Japan, in that order. However, this process was always being redirected by circumstance, which meant that the security policy, including defense legislation, always caught up afterwards. It was a situation of so-called "chasing" (*atooi*). Accordingly, Japan's defenses were not prepared for what Bush called a "new war," and it was unavoidable that Japan would have to pass a new anti-terrorism law with a specified end-date.

Because Japan's response to the war on terror had been permitted by legislation of specified duration, an extension required deliberation in the Diet. At that time, Japan was in a period of "political instability," when policies were affected by the domestic political situation. For example, in the summer of 2007, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), looking to become the governing party, won a sweeping victory in the Upper House. As the leading party in the Upper House, the DPJ rejected the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law and thereby temporarily stopped the activities of the JSDF. Following the rejection, a new Replenishment Support Special Measures Law was submitted to the Diet and, after being voted down in the Upper House, it was reapproved in the Lower House and promulgated on January 16, 2008. Subsequently, the Replenishment Support Special Measures Law was extended twice, but after the DPJ took power, the law's term lapsed on January 1, 2010. With this, the activities related to the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, along with refueling activities in the Indian Ocean that had been implemented for eight years (with the exception of a temporary suspension) ended.²¹

²⁰ Ibid. 312.

²¹ Tamura, Shigenobu, Kenichi Takahashi, and Kazuhisa Shimada, eds. *Japan's Defense Law*. (Tokyo: Naigai Shuppan, 2008). 493.

The activities permitted by these special measures laws made clear that Japan's security policy system was inadequate and too reactive. Because it had been developed to adapt to the post-Cold War's "unstable peace," the system was not nimble and proactive enough to pass security legislation and build public consensus in the more dynamic, post-9/11 security environment.

At the time that changes were being made to the replenishment activities in the Indian Ocean, based on the Replenishment Special Measures Law, the threat of pirates in the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia became apparent. The UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted several resolutions calling for international cooperation to help deter the pirates. Nineteen countries, including Japan, sponsored a joint proposal, and with the agreement of the UN General Assembly, UNSC 1838 was approved on October 7, 2008. UNSC 1838 called on relevant countries with the capabilities to deploy naval warships and military aircraft to proactively join in the anti-piracy operations in international waters off the coast of Somalia. Japan responded to the call, and on March 13, 2009, the Anti-Piracy Measures Law was approved by the Cabinet. In addition, as a temporary emergency measure until the law was passed, the JSDF was dispatched for a maritime police action based on the Self-Defense Forces Law. The Anti-Piracy Measures Law was approved in the Diet on June 19, 2010.²² Although the law was passed in response to the sudden increase in piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia, the law that was not limited to these situations. It was a general and perpetual law targeted at piracy, based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.²³

The Obama Administration to Present

In 2009, the year that the Obama Administration came into office in the United States, a DPJ administration assumed office in Japan. It was the first non-Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) administration since 1994. The following year, a new National Defense Program Outline was drawn up. In contrast to the Outline that had been in place since 1976, which emphasized the "existence of defense capabilities," the focal point of the 2010 Outline was the "use of defense capabilities," which emphasized a dynamic defense capability that could support missions more effectively.²⁴ Subsequently, the 2013 Outline, drawn up by the same LDP administration, created a Dynamic Joint Defense Force. In the background of this dramatic transformation of defense concepts were dramatic events in the international security environment.

²² Ibid. 664–668.

²³ Ibid. 670.

²⁴ Ministry of Defense. *Defense of Japan 2014*. (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 2014). 141.

Among those events was the Chinese trawler collision incident in the waters off the Senkaku Islands in 2010. With the transfer of ownership of the Senkaku Islands to Japan, implemented by the DPJ administration, the situation in the East China Sea quickly became tense, and tensions continue to this day. There are also examples of security improvements in the oceans surrounding Japan and the sea lanes from Japan to the Indian Ocean, where a task force has been dispatched since 2001, such as reduced incidents of piracy in the Gulf of Aden. At the same time, with the expansion of Russia's military presence, increased provocations by China in the South and East China Seas, and the development of nuclear weapons by North Korea, potential problems for Japan are increasing.

Given the instability in the seas from Japan to the Middle East and the fact that Japan depends so heavily on energy and food imported by sea, Japan must work to preserve the stable use of the oceans on the fringes of the Eurasian continent, including the Arctic Ocean. To this end, in April 2015, Prime Minister Abe referred to “the three principles of the Asian waters” in the first speech by a Japanese Prime Minister to a joint session of the U.S. Congress. In order to make the oceans free and peaceful, where the rule of law is carried out, he said that nations must base their claims on international law, not use military force or threats to support their claims, and use all available peaceful means to resolve conflicts.

At the same time, Japan's alliance partner, the United States, was proceeding with a policy of “rebalance” to the Asia-Pacific region. The main pillars of this policy were the application of international rules and order, strengthening of alliance relationships, and strengthening of power projection capabilities in Asia and the Pacific Ocean, including increased U.S. presence from Southeast Asia to the Indian Ocean. To summarize, problems are at hand in the Asia-Pacific, and the potential perpetrators are not terrorists or pirates, but rather state actors, making maritime security a common subject of discussion among countries.

Roles of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF)

Establishment of the JASDF and the Cold War Era

The nine years after the end of World War II was a “blank” period for Japan’s Air Force. The world saw rapid development of aeronautical technology, from propeller fighter planes to jet aircraft, while Japan had to rely on major support from the U.S. Air Force for bases, equipment (including aircraft), and training. The Air Force Build-up Plan and the Memorandum on the Establishment of Japan’s Air Force, both drafted by former Imperial Army and Navy aviators, had the biggest influences on the establishment of the Japanese Air Force. The main content of those measures concerned the U.S. Air Force in Japan, which was responsible for protecting Japan’s sovereign airspace at that time.¹

These plans stated that a new air force would replace the U.S. Air Force in Japan, and that it would match the U.S. forces in size and continue the same air defense strategy. The U.S. State Department presented Plans of Support for Japan’s Air Force Establishment, drafted by the U.S. Department of the Air Force, to the government of Japan. The document described how the U.S. was planning to help found the new air force, and became the basis of the organizational structure and equipment stockpile of the newly established air force. In this way, with major support from the U.S. Air Force, the JASDF was established on July 1, 1954, with 6,738 soldiers and 148 trainer aircrafts. The initial plan was to have 44,827 soldiers and 33 squadrons by the end of 1959.² Although the original establishment plan was downsized, due to Japan’s severe financial situation as well as delays in personnel training and acquisition of bases, the most important duty of the new JASDF was to respond to violations against Japan’s airspace.

To counter the U.S. B-52, the Soviet Far Eastern Force dramatically increased its strength by deploying the M-4 by 1956 and the Tu-95 by 1957. The Soviet Union needed Japan as its staging base in order to attack the U.S. mainland, since the flight range of Soviet long-range strategic bombers was not enough to reach the United States at that time. The JASDF’s role to respond to airspace violations in the Far East region, where the

¹ Air Staff Office. “Koukujieitai 50 nenshi Hensaniinkai.” *Koukujieitai 50 Nenshi*. (March 2006). 45.

² *Ibid.* 49.

Soviet Far Eastern Air Force was very active, played an important role in deterring the aviation activities of the Soviet Union Armed Forces. The Soviet Union Far Eastern Armed Forces had increased their capabilities throughout the Cold War era, and in 1979, they also began improving their equipment in the Northern Territories of Japan, so that by 1980, their capabilities were very close to that of divisions.

Since 1958, when the JASDF took over the mission of protecting Japanese airspace, which had been carried out by the U.S. Air Force, it has been improving its air defense capability by enhancing its personnel, equipment, and training. However, due to its strict domestic laws, Japan regards defense of its airspace as a duty in peacetime, so the use of force is limited to that of a police action.³ The limitation is a dilemma because use of force is allowed under international law, based on the fact that measures against airspace violations are inherently to protect sovereignty and always require military operations, regardless of whether they occur in times of peace or conflict. Japanese law also stipulates that, when JASDF fighter interceptors respond to airspace violations and make contact with enemies, they must always act in pairs of two fighters. They are not allowed to use force against enemy fighters as acts of self-defense or to carry out emergency evacuations, unless one of the pair is attacked. Also, pilots are prosecuted, based on laws related to dangerous activities in the air, when enemy fighters are crashed.

U.S.–Japan bilateral studies and joint exercises started after the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation were formulated in 1978. The JASDF saw these exercises as important opportunities to improve its capability because Japan's restrictions on domestic exercise facilities and spaces had contributed to a lack of practical experience. That is, the restrictions kept the JASDF from engaging in large-scale exercises simulating combat against fighters, collaborating with other armed forces, and training for electronic warfare.

In the final phase of the Cold War era, the United States asked Japan to increase its defense capability, due to the drastic increase in capabilities of the Soviet Far Eastern Armed Forces. Especially after the deployment of the Tu-22M long-range bomber in the Far East region, the attack capability of the Soviet Union Air Forces dramatically improved.⁴ In order to prevent the Tu-22M from freely maneuvering in Japan's territorial airspace and the surrounding seas and airspace, the United States asked Japan to activate

³ Although minimum use of force is allowed in policing activities—just enough for Japan to protect itself and those under its protection—the use of force to protect sovereignty is not limited. In reality, however, it is impossible for the JASDF to crash military aircraft that invade Japan's airspace and take other forms of hostile action, as other countries do.

⁴ The Tu-22M bomber's main weapon became the improved air-to-surface missile, the Kh-22, which could carry nuclear warheads and carry out long-range attacks.

its aerospace activities, primarily by strengthening measures against airspace violations.⁵ This was one of the best examples of how the JASDF's efforts to improve its overall air defense capability directly contributed to the U.S. containment strategy against Soviet Union.

End of the Cold War Era to the Bush Administration

The end of the Cold War had significant impacts on Soviet Union Far Eastern Armed Forces capabilities. The Soviet Union reduced the quantity of its Far Eastern Armed Forces' equipment, although it continued to modernize and improve the quality of the equipment. In December 1991, strategic fighter jets were scattered across Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union,⁶ so the Mig-23 in the Northern Territories of Japan was withdrawn by May 1993. Since the JASDF had regarded the Soviet Union as its potential enemy, it lost its primary target, because advancements in military aviation technology made measures against airspace violations militarily less important, and because of the Russian military's reduced activities in the Far East region. This meant that the Japanese government no longer (even temporarily) needed to use "financial difficulties" as an excuse to resist the U.S. insistence that Japan improve its air defense capability. Thus, after the Cold War, the number of scrambles in response to airspace violations decreased dramatically, dropping from 488 in 1991 to 311 in 1993 and 166 in 1995.⁷

The international community, led by the United Nations, was virtually united in opposing Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The United States played a leadership role in the subsequent Gulf War, known as Operation Desert Storm, which broke out in January 1991, and used massive airpower to quickly wipe out the Iraqi military. The air warfare strategy of the coalition forces was carried out in joint operations. The stealth F-117, which had superior information-gathering capability, penetrated the air defense network in Baghdad, and proved the strength of the military concept known as Revolution in Military Affairs, which takes advantage of electronic warfare and precision guided munitions. The strength of strategic air power was proven again in the Kosovo War and the Second Iraq War. Witnessing these examples of the massive power projection capability of the U.S. Air

⁵ Kitaoka, Shinichi. Akio Watanabe, et al. *Nichibeidoumei toha Nanika*. (Tokyo: Chuokoron-Shinsya, 2011). 28–29.

⁶ The Russian Air Force had approximately 700 bomber jets (Tu-95, Tu-16, Tu-22, and Tu-26) and 3,700 strategic fighter jets (Mig-27, Mig-29, Su-17/22, Su-24, Su-25, and Su-27) in the early 1990s.

⁷ The number of scrambles conducted by the JASDF was greatest in 1984, during the Cold War, when there were 944, and least in 2003, after the Cold War, when there were 158. Until 2003, most of the scrambles were against Soviet Union (Russian) Armed Forces aircraft. In recent years, the number of scrambles has been increasing, and about half are now against Chinese Armed Forces aircraft.

Force, the JASDF started to plan a fifth generation of fighter jets that would have technology to support stealth, guided precision munitions, and situational awareness.

In 1994, the Defense Issue Commission Group was established under the Prime Minister of Japan. It proposed new principles for Japan's national defense. The National Defense Program Outline was amended in 1995, based on Commission Group proposals. The Outline did not specify Japan's potential enemies but called for maintaining air defense capability, since a drastic reduction in capability could cause a power vacuum that might destabilize the region. The principles also indicated that the JSDF should participate in international military missions, such as UN missions. It was a transition period for the JASDF, during which it could expand its training exercises or conduct actual, non-combat missions (involving fighter interceptor units, anti-aircraft missile units, and early-warning and control units), as for example, when it took part in the 1992 Cambodia peacekeeping operations, and when it started operating the Japanese government's aircraft.⁸

The U.S.–Japan Joint Declaration on Security in 1996 and the second amendment to the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation in 1997 made it clear that protection of mainland Japan is the JSDF's first priority. These measures also allowed the U.S. Armed Forces to use JSDF facilities and private airports and seaports if contingencies in the areas surrounding Japan threatened Japanese or U.S. peace and security, and they allowed the JSDF to provide non-combat, logistic support to U.S. forces. With these new frameworks for JSDF activities, planning for U.S.–Japan joint operations made big progress, and joint exercises saw further improvement. These joint efforts allowed the JASDF to improve its skills, send fighter interceptor troops on overseas operations with early warning and control units, and involve transport aircraft in highly strategic exercises.

The Obama Administration to Present

Although the United States projected its massive power in various, post-Cold War conflicts, the 9/11 attacks on the U.S. mainland transformed the international security environment, ending U.S. unipolar hegemony. In 2005, the U.S.–Japan Security Consultative Committee (the two-plus-two meeting) reviewed common strategic goals between the two countries. The U.S.–Japan Joint Statement, issued after the meeting, made it clear that the role of military strength needed to expand from traditional national security to international cooperation on a global scale.⁹ Since Japan regarded the war on terror as its own national security issue, it provided transportation and supply support to U.S. forces,

⁸ The international peace mission in Cambodia was the first overseas operation for the JASDF. The mission was the largest that the United Nations had ever conducted. The JGSDF sent about six-hundred personnel for a year, and the JMSDF and JASDF were responsible for transport.

⁹ *Defense of Japan 2015*. 181.

based on the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law; strengthened security of the U.S. military facilities in Japan, based on the Self-Defense Forces Act; sent escort ships to the Indian Ocean for information collection; and joined international peacekeeping missions to support Afghan refugees.

To support transportation and supply for U.S. forces, based on the Anti-Terrorism Special Measure Law, the JASDF fulfilled its air duty using C-1 and C-130 transport aircraft, KC-767 tanker aircraft, and U-4 multipurpose aircraft. Starting in 2004, the JSDF participated in reconstruction in Iraq, provided air transport for four-and-a-half years, and jointly managed the Air and Space Command Center of U.S. Central Command, all of which significantly helped the JASDF to improve its ability to conduct overseas operations. In 2009, the JSDF founded its base in Djibouti for counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia, and since then, has been stationing JMSDF vessels and JASDF aircraft at the base and sending JGSDF personnel there to provide base security. The JASDF has also been accumulating experience in the use of government KC-767 tanker aircraft and in the use of C-130 aircraft for international emergency assistance programs.

When North Korea rejected special inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in November 2002 and withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, it confirmed suspicions that it was developing nuclear weapons. In order to enable the JSDF to flexibly respond to emergency situations, the government of Japan decided to procure a ballistic missile defense (BMD) system and reorganize its legal systems related to those situations. A BMD Joint Task Force was organized, with the Air Defense Commander of the JASDF as joint operations commander, and the decision was made to centralize command and control through the Japan Aerospace Defense Ground Environment (JADGE) radar network. Support from the U.S. Armed Forces is essential in order to efficiently and effectively utilize the BMD system, which is a part of a U.S.-owned BMD system that includes the BMD-capable Aegis ships, guided surface-to-air Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) missile, and transportable radar surveillance (TPY-2) that are deployed in Japan. The U.S. and Japanese governments agreed to jointly develop the BMD technology, and steady progress has been observed.¹⁰

In the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, the JASDF played a role in the large-scale Joint Task Forces that dealt with dispersion of radioactive materials from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Reactor as well as damage caused by the massive earthquake and tsunami. The United States sent sixteen-thousand troops, one-hundred-forty aircraft, and twenty warships, and provided tremendous support in search and rescue, cargo shipment, and countermeasures for dispersion of radioactive materials. In addition to such larger-scale cases of U.S.-Japan joint coordination, the

¹⁰ Ibid. 230-231

change in the interpretation of “collective self-defense” in July 2014, the amendment to the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation in April 2015, and the reforms of the legal authority for national security policy in September 2015 suggest that the roles played by the JASDF can be expanded to a global scale.

Currently, the aviation activities of the Russian Armed Forces in the Far East region have been gradually increasing. In addition, with China’s rapid increase in defense capability, Chinese aviators’ activities near Japan’s airspace have also been increasing. In order to cope with these increases, Japan has been forced to strengthen its early warning and surveillance activities and engage in a number of scrambles in response to airspace violations.¹¹ Yet, it is clear that these responses, which have been the primary task for the JASDF since its establishment, are having less impact as deterrence measures. In this respect, given the rapid advancement of military technology, it is urgent to consider that Japan’s approach of seeing measures against invasions of airspace as “policing activities” has become relatively ineffective. Therefore, the JASDF should reconsider and redefine its roles and missions. Particularly, it is critical to reexamine the day-to-day practice of scrambles, and seek out a new model in order to maximize limited resources.

¹¹ The JASDF conducted 943 scrambles in 2014, which was the second highest number in its history. Of those, 464 were against Chinese military aircraft, which was the highest number ever against the Chinese.

Dramatic Changes in the International Security Environment

Issues in the World

In the previous chapters, we discussed the roles of the JSDF branches during the Cold War and post-Cold War eras, with the post-Cold War era divided into two periods, focusing on changes in U.S. power. From the perspective of the U.S.–Japan alliance, the Soviet Union and communism were the greatest security threats in the bipolar world that lasted for a half-century after World War II. That dynamic ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall, liberation of Eastern Europe, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the creation of Russia.

There is no doubt, however, that these evolving, international political dynamics have not meant “peace,” but rather a “spread of threats instead of cessation of threats.”¹ Threats in the post–Cold War era have included civil wars in the Third World and regional conflicts in the 1990s, and international terrorism and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq in the 2000s. In fact, the 2000s, thus far, have been described as “the third wave of the national security in the post-Cold War,”² given the emergence of developing countries, especially China, and the reemergence of Russia. In short, changes in international political dynamics are undergoing rapid change, as the world transitions from a unipolar to a multipolar system.

Along with these changes, interdependence among countries has been spreading and deepening, which means there is greater risk that disorder or security concerns in one country or area can influence the entire international community. Specifically, one can observe an upward trend in gray-zones, which are categorized as neither purely violent nor

¹ Gaddis. (1991). 108.

² Watanabe, Akio, ed. *Japan under the Power Shift: Its Security in the 2010s*. (Tokyo: National Institute of Defense Studies, 2014), 4.

purely peaceful, whether tensions involve territories, sovereignties, ethnicities, or economics. In addition, the international community is increasingly facing the challenge of securing access to and use of space and cyberspace.³ In the current international security environment, and even in the midst of these power transitions, the United States will keep playing its role as “the single most powerful country”⁴ and be “expected to take responsibility for peace and stability of the world.”⁵ However, there is danger in this multipolar era for the United States, Japan, and the U.S.–Japan Alliance.⁶

Issues in the Asia-Pacific Region

Among the changes in international political dynamics is the power transition in East Asia, in which China is chasing the United States. In recent years, China has changed its strategy from “hedging”—improving in economic and military strength while maintaining its cooperative relationship with the United States—to “challenging”—exploiting its strength to take action. Evidence of the change, which started and was implemented carefully in the early 2000s was observed when the United States was forced to shift its attention from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific, and it accelerated after U.S. policy towards China changed the country’s status to “responsible stakeholder.” This change occurred alongside China’s rapid increase in military activities, especially in the sea and air, and in response to the disputes over profits in the East and South China Seas.

After China, the most significant regional issue is North Korea. Since the end of the Cold War, the international and regional communities have taken a multilateral approach (Six-Party Talks) to North Korea, uniting around a strategy “not to allow” it to have nuclear weapons. However, the country kept developing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, and when Kim Jong Un came to power, he declared North Korea to be a “nuclear power.” That same year, North Korea conducted nuclear tests, which it called “hydrogen bomb tests.” In addition, North Korea has repeatedly escalated the tension in the region and has been a force of instability in the security of East Asia and the international community.⁷

The third significant regional development is modernization of the Russian military and its increased activities.⁸ Overcoming the economic difficulties after the

³ *Defense of Japan 2015*. 142.

⁴ National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends in 2008: A Transformed World*. (Washington, DC: National Intelligence Council, 2008).

⁵ *Defense of Japan 2015*. 142.

⁶ National Intelligence Council

⁷ *Defense of Japan 2015*. 142.

⁸ *Ibid.* 143.

dissolution of the Soviet Union, when the military could barely afford to conduct exercises or purchase new equipment, Russia restarted combat duties of strategic bombers in 2007 and has increased its military exercises since 2008, when President Putin declared the “resurrection” of Russia. According to the 2010 Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, the primary concerns of the Russian military are NATO’s expansion in Eastern Europe and development of the missile defense system in Europe. Since the South Ossetia War in 2008, Russia’s activities have centered mainly in Europe and the Middle East, such as with the Crimean crisis and intervention in Syria. As for military equipment, the country has been reducing its bloated conventional forces, which contributed to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, in order to transform its military for small-scale conflicts, while maintaining its balance of nuclear weapons capability with the United States. Although Russia does not aim to be a military superpower as the Soviet Union used to be, the country wants to be one pole in the multi-polarized world, and remove U.S. unipolarism, which makes Russia a force of instability in the region.

Assessment of Japan’s Security Policy Reform

In the previous section, we discussed the international security environment’s transition from “bipolar” during the Cold War to “unipolar” in the aftermath of the Cold War to “multipolar” today. In particular, we highlighted the fact that the Asia-Pacific region has been witnessing a power shift from the United States to China. We now turn to the power of Japan in the international community.

Japan used to account for 10 percent of the world’s gross domestic product (GDP), and had the world’s second largest economy (after the United States) with its economic policy of “armor lightly and prioritize economy.” However, in 2010, it lost its second-place position to China. In addition, Japan’s economic power has been rapidly falling after twenty years of economic recession, during which its public debt has grown to 200 percent of its GDP. In this respect, Japan is facing two power shifts: one between the United States and China and the other within Japan itself. In response, Japan has reduced its military expenses as well as its Official Development Assistance budget, which was a key feature of its foreign policy.⁹ Although this “graceful decline” was accepted, the Abe Administration, starting at the end of 2012, set goals to overcome the decline.¹⁰

Under these circumstances, the Abe Administration achieved a drastic reform of Japan’s national security policy. The rest of this section will be devoted to summarizing this

⁹ Watanabe (2014). 22–23.

¹⁰ During his speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies on February 22, 2013, Prime Minister Abe stated, “Japan has come back.”

transition. First, changes from roughly 2012–2013 included: establishment of the National Security Council at the end of fiscal year 2013 to improve national security policy decision-making; formulation of a first-ever Strategy of National Security; and formulation of a new National Defense Program Outline and Mid-term Defense Build-up Program, based on the Strategy of National Security report. The strategy replaced the Basic Policy of National Defense, adopted by the cabinet on May 20, 1957. Furthermore, Japan enacted the Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets, which also informed the national security strategy, to guide the sharing of intelligence with other countries.

Japan also introduced Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, after a review of its conventional Three Principles on Arms Exports. The updated principles presented new opportunities for Japan to jointly develop and produce defense equipment with allies and other “friendly countries,” while enabling Japan to transfer weapons under certain conditions. This was an unconventional approach, because it included defense equipment as a means to realize the national security policy.

The Abe Administration and his ruling party offered new interpretations of the constitution to enable collective self-defense under certain conditions. Japan also participated in international missions, including peacekeeping operations, based on international standards and conducted effective and practical logistical support. The administration also formulated new national security guidelines and established the new security system. All of these moves are consequential breaks with tradition. Even though the security guidelines adopted in 1978 enabled Japan to respond to emergencies affecting Japan, they did not allow the country to respond to emergencies in the Far East. The 1997 guidelines allowed Japan to do so in the Far East, but Japan could not claim collective self-defense. With the reform of the national security system, the newest guidelines allow Japan to deal with the geographical issues in the East and South China Seas, situations on the Korean Peninsula, and issues in space and cyberspace. Japan may also expand U.S.–Japan cooperation (defense equipment and technical cooperation) in peacetime or emergencies.

Finally, Japan’s new national security reforms, including the Legislation for Peace and Security (a package of amendments to ten laws) and the International Peace Support Bill, which helps to ensure “seamless” responses to crisis situation by reconciling the “right of policing” and the “right of self-defense.” The need for such seamlessness is only becoming more acute, due to the higher importance of gray-zone situations; emergencies on the Korean Peninsula; maritime tensions in the East China Sea, South China Sea, Indian Ocean, and Middle East region; and the need for international cooperation to promote peace and carry out peacekeeping operations.

Future Agendas and Challenges

Agendas on Joint Operations

The long-term goal of U.S. national security policies is to reconstruct offensive strategies to support power projection capability in the face of leaner budgets.¹ During the Cold War, under containment policy, the United States kept the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region by cooperating with allies, while launching various strategies to maintain the balance of power between NATO forces and the Warsaw Treaty Organization. During the post-Cold War period, a time of U.S. hegemony, the United States moved ahead with the Revolution in Military Affairs concept, as it fought the Gulf War and Kosovo War. Reclaiming global superiority based on nuclear weapons doesn't seem to jibe with RMA, which, at least as I understand it, promotes military strength based on things like technological innovation, nonlethal strikes, and asymmetric tactics.

Cooperative actions between the JSDF and the U.S. Armed Forces in the Asia-Pacific region are necessary for Japan's national defense. Moreover, in order to deepen mutual trust between the U.S. Armed Forces and JSDF and ensure U.S. cooperation, all operations that the JSDF conduct in the future, including international peacekeeping, should be in accordance with the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation. For example, the JSDF needs to organize the Joint Task Force Command based on discussions with U.S. Joint Command staff members. In 2006, the Abe administration enacted legislation to elevate the Defense Agency to the status of a ministry, establish the Joint Staff Office, and stipulate that all operations be under the integrated joint operations structure. To enable this smoother coordination with the United States, a permanent Joint Operations Headquarters needs to be considered in addition to a Ground Force Command to oversee all local army commands.

¹ In 2014, then-U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel articulated the concept of the Defense Innovation Initiative, which, he said, had to be developed as the Third Off-Set Strategy. U.S. experts pointed out that the goal of this strategy was recovery of U.S. Armed Forces military superiority by rebuilding U.S. power projection capabilities.

In the new era of international security, the role of the JSDF is not only to defend mainland Japan but also to help the U.S.–Japan alliance cooperate internationally. It is necessary to recognize that national laws governing the JSDF limit such cooperative activities, and there are gaps between national laws and international laws. However, JSDF leaders, who are well aware of these limitations and gaps, must continue to advocate for policy changes that will save the lives and property of the Japanese people and maintain the U.S.–Japan alliance.

Although it is extremely difficult to synchronize two national forces for joint operations, given their different levels of readiness and equipment, one could argue that synchronization is both inevitable and imperative. The JGSDF, JMSDF, and JASDF were formed and have developed with strong support and advice from the U.S. Armed Forces on matters ranging from force structure to strategies to training programs. Now is the time for the JSDF to act. Only ten years have passed since joint operations were established in the JSDF. Though it is difficult and takes time, continued Japan-U.S. joint exercises and training are crucial to the ongoing development of the JSDF's joint operational capabilities.

Agendas for the JGSDF

The security environment around Japan is tense. China is rising, based on the ideal of “great national rejuvenation.” Russia has reactivated its military capabilities. And North Korea is pursuing nuclear weapons. In this environment, the JGSDF is being asked to prepare for various contingencies, including invasions of the southern and western islands, attacks by special operations forces or guerrillas, large-scale or extraordinary national disasters, and crises requiring international peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

Today's greatest potential threat to Japan is China, which regards Japan as a potential enemy and claims that the United States aspires to “hegemonism, power politics, and neo-interventionism.”² Therefore, the focus of Japan's security strategy and training must be on preventing and coping with the threat of China, while also being prepared for Russia and North Korea. Thus, the JSDF needs to fully maintain its defense capabilities. Centering on the U.S.–Japan alliance, Japan must also promote tight relationships with and among Australia, India, and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states.

For the JGSDF, the urgent matter is to prepare for “short-duration, high intensity regional conflict,” which the Chinese People's Liberation Army stresses. Hence, the JGSDF needs to build up the defense of the southern and western sectors by reviewing defense plans for those islands in order to cope with Chinese ballistic and cruise missiles,

² China's Military Strategy, announced on May 26, 2015.

and enhance the survivability of JSDF bases and camps. Regarding China's A2/AD, it is critical to have specific cooperation plans based on the U.S. Armed Forces' Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons (JAM-GC)³ and clear division of roles between Japan and the United States.

In order to achieve these strategic goals, the development of an "adaptive agile ground force," currently in progress, must be achieved. In particular, establishing a Ground Forces Command, organizing Rapid Deployment Divisions and Brigades, establishing an Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade, and reforming Research Headquarters should be promoted. All of action will contribute to a fully functioning defense capacity, and enable the JGSDF to address three key questions related to the defense of remote islands: whether "prepositioning units" are functional, whether "rapidly deploying units" work, and whether "recapturing invaded islands" is possible with the equipment of the JMSDF and JASDF.

Furthermore, "Cross Domain Operations" should be considered in regard to all ground operations, particularly in the remote island areas. In other words, since Japan is surrounded by sea, responsibilities for the JGSDF must extend to other domains, such as space and cyber, and include joint operations in ocean and air domains. In addition, training for newly emerging roles should cover so-called "*kaketsuke-keigo*"—aiding geographically distant units or personnel participating in the same operations who are under attack. In short, the JGSDF must demonstrate that it can fulfill tough, diverse new roles in this security environment.

Agendas for the JMSDF

Japan's first National Security Strategy, established in December 2013, presented long-term strategies for Japan to make proactive contributions to peace and stability, based on principles of international cooperation. This was a departure from its long-standing position of pacifism. However, it was a departure necessitated by changing external conditions.

This paper has laid out strategic approaches for maintaining the peace and stability of Japan, given these dynamic external conditions. Those approaches involve: (1) expanding the roles of the JSDF and strengthening all-around defense capabilities of the JSDF, (2) strengthening the U.S.–Japan alliance, (3) strengthening diplomacy and security cooperation with friendly countries to support peace and stability in the international community, (4) contributing proactively to international activities for peace and stability, (5) strengthening cooperation based on universal values to resolve global issues, and (6)

³ The U.S. Department of Defense adopted the Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons to replace the Air Sea Battle Concept.

strengthening the domestic foundation that supports national security and promotes domestic and global understanding.

As part of Japan's national defense, the importance of marine security and stable "sea lanes of communication," stretching from the waters surrounding Japan through the Straits of Malacca to the Persian Gulf, cannot be overstated. In fact, the strategy states that Japan will play leading roles in maintaining and developing "Open and Stable Seas," and that Japan's responsibilities include peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with relevant international laws. The shift of the balance of power is obvious around Japan. While it encouraged the world economy's center of gravity to shift from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the center of global security has also moved to the Asian-Pacific region as the U.S. rebalance policy suggests.

The JMSDF is making various efforts to protect Japan's public life and property, maintain the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region, defend the sea around Japan, ensure freedom of navigation, and contribute to creating a more stable security environment. Specifically, the JMSDF conducts early warning and surveillance activities as well as unilateral, joint, and multilateral exercises and training, anti-piracy operations, and capacity building activities. These activities extend across the world.

The JMSDF relies both on its own capability and on cooperation and teamwork with the U.S. Navy and other marine forces in order to ensure marine security. Moreover, Japan is increasingly acting like an "international commonwealth," working not only for stability and prosperity in Japan but also in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world.

While the geographical importance of the U.S.–Japan alliance—so key during the Cold War— has been diminishing, ethnic conflicts, religious conflicts, and strikes by international terrorist groups and other "non-state actors, have been increasing, challenging the international order. However, since the 2010s, there has also been a resurgence of hostile actions by "state actors," such as Russian intervention in Ukraine and China's movement in the South China Sea. These revivals of traditional threats seem to further highlight the end of U.S. hegemony and the emergence of a multipolar international order.

Although the rise of menacing "state actors" boosts the importance of traditional deterrent power, it is important to realize that the U.S.–Japan alliance is also becoming more significant. Therefore, the JMSDF is convinced that it should stress efforts to deepen its relationship with the U.S. Navy. Today, seventy years since the end of World War II, the U.S.–Japan alliance is one of the world's tightest bilateral relationships and one of enduring importance. What is more, the alliance can handle traditional and non-traditional threats, symbolizes the U.S. commitment to global maritime security, and is key to ensuring the cooperation of other allies. Thus, the JMSDF needs to continue to play more active roles in this unique partnership.

In 2015, Admiral Tomohisa Takei, Chief of Staff of the JMSDF, delivered a speech at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, entitled “From Ocean of War to Ocean of Prosperity.” In it, he identified three tasks the JMSDF should carry out to prevent the Indo-Pacific from reverting to an ocean of war. First, the U.S.–Japan alliance should be reinforced to maintain the U.S. presence in the region. Second, regional navies must promote multilayered cooperation at sea. Third, navies must increase capacity-building activities in the region.

As noted above, Japan’s modern navy originated from what is known as Yonai’s Will—directives handed down by Admiral of the Imperial Navy Mitsumasa Yonai, who was firmly against the Pacific War and tried to end it quickly. Thus, he wanted the reconstructed Japanese Navy to reflect his wish that Japan never again experience war. From the Cold War era until today, the JMSDF, in partnership with the U.S. Navy, has, fortunately, contributed to and maintained the peace of Japan in the face of many threats. Now, facing new threats, Admiral Yonai would have hoped that the JMSDF would keep its focus on making the Indo-Pacific an ocean of prosperity rather than an ocean of war.

Agendas for the JASDF

The primary, day-to-day role of the JASDF, since its founding, has been to scramble against adversary aircraft that violate Japan’s territorial airspace. It is not an overstatement to say that the JASDF has focused all of its efforts—organizing, equipping, and training—on this singular mission. However, as previously noted, military technology advancements and security environment changes are raising questions about whether its operations, which are carried out at the level of “police actions,” continue to produce an adequate deterrent. In fact, the way it currently conducts its missions is so outdated, there are no other national air forces like the JASDF. Thus, it is expected that the JASDF will need more highly skilled personnel, updated legal supports, and more effective ways to use limited resources in order to operate into the future.

From its inception, the JASDF has considered itself a smaller version of the U.S. Air Force. As the gaps between the JASDF and U.S. Air Force have grown, in terms of technology advancement and strategy development, it has become even more important for the JASDF to model the U.S. Air Force. This means, in part, that no matter how small the JASDF is, compared to the U.S. Air Force, it must still maintain interoperability. Therefore, all manned aircraft that the JASDF acquires for joint air operations in the future must have stealth, networking, and situational awareness functions. In addition, although the U.S. Armed Forces’ ability to carry out extended deterrence has been discussed many times between the two countries’ experts, the concept of deterrence is becoming extremely complex, requiring weapons systems with highly advanced capabilities. Thus, since the JASDF holds only conventional weapons systems, Japan-U.S. deterrence discussions

should also delve more deeply into how the JASDF will play a role as a deterrent power in the future.

Currently, the most important opportunity for the JASDF to improve its air power performance is through Japan-U.S. or multilateral joint exercises and training. International peacekeeping operations and responses to major disasters are also great opportunities, since most of those operations require overseas deployments and extensive logistical support capabilities.

The original personnel involved in the establishment of the JASDF probably thought, “We lost the battles in the air domain in the last war. Therefore, the creation of a strong and independent air force along with joint air operations with the United States, are essential for Japanese defense.” Since then, the objective of defending Japan with U.S. Air Force assistance and cooperation has not changed.

From the standpoint of the United States, the U.S. Air Force was launched in 1947, making it a fairly new organization compared to the U.S. Army and Navy. To help develop the newly created JASDF and designate its independent roles were critical tasks for the U.S. Air Force. That effort resulted in limiting the JASDF to reacting to urgent situations, alongside the United States. Today, in the era of international cooperation, the JASDF must not only be tasked with defense of Japan but also with counterterrorism activities and global contributions. Thus, the JASDF should highly develop air performance capabilities for operations involving the Japan-U.S. alliance.

Agendas for Cyber and Space Domains

In today’s world, there are now five domains that must be defended, as cyber and space have joined the traditional ground, maritime, and air domains. The importance of cyber and space cannot be overstated. In the area of cyber, close cooperation between military cyber operations at the JSDF level and the government’s other national cyber security operations is critical. In Japan, cyber espionage against ministries, companies, and universities; cyber-crimes involving banking institutions; and cyber-attacks on electronic, transportation, and financial infrastructures are huge concerns. Although Japan has developed a cyber security system—establishing a National Center of Incident Readiness and Strategy for Cybersecurity in January 2015, passing the Basic Act on Cybersecurity in November 2014, and publishing the Cybersecurity Strategy in September 2015—problems with limited budgets and human resources remain. The JSDF should contribute to the formulation of national cyber security system as much as possible.

To strengthen the JSDF’s cyberspace operations, it should build up its Cyber Defense Forces, which currently has about one-hundred personnel—vastly smaller than

cyber units in major countries, like China or the United States, whose operations involve thousands of people. In fact, following other major countries, the JSDF should be the locus of the country's most highly skilled cyber personnel and be the center of national cyber security operations.

A joint cyber security strategy among the JGSDF, JMSDF, and JASDF should also be established, and it must include a strong training component. The cyber strategies of China, Russia, and North Korea are serious threats to Japan, particularly Chinese attacks led by the government and carried out by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). To fight these threats, cooperation is critical with the United States, whose resources include the National Security Agency (NSA), Cyber Command in the Department of Defense, and numerous cyber security companies. The JSDF must also continue to accumulate the latest knowledge and methodologies through Japan-U.S. joint cyberspace exercises. Finally, it is important to note that cyber operations frequently involve intelligence and espionage. Thus, in the field of "information warfare," the United States has important experience and resources to share with Japan.

In modern warfare, use of satellites is also critical. If Japan's satellites are destroyed or do not function well, the nation's whole system of Command, Control, Communications, Computer, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR), which is dispensable for JSDF joint operations, could be paralyzed. As of January 2015, the United States had 526 satellites, far more than China's 132. However, China designates a large number of its satellites solely for the PLA (according to one source, 40 percent). Moreover, China has been prioritizing space operations and actively seeking military capabilities in the space domain.

In 2007, China conducted a missile test and destroyed its own satellite 850 kilometers above the Earth. This experience revealed that many Japanese and American low-orbit satellites are vulnerable to attack. In July 2014, China conducted three experiments with land-based, anti-missile technology, the same technology used for anti-satellite weapons systems. Also, China possesses jamming systems that can disrupt the functioning of communication and ISR satellites. In short, China has anti-satellite weapons systems ready for practical use.⁴

By contrast, the United States had traditionally been inactive in deploying anti-satellite weapons systems, fearing that such deployments might justify those of other countries and jeopardize the operations of the U.S. Armed Forces, which are dependent on satellites. However, in 2002, the United States changed this policy. In 2004, the budget for a limited anti-satellite capability (capable of disrupting enemy communication

⁴ Heginbotham, Eric, et al. *The U.S.-CHINA Military Scorecard: Forces, Geography, and the Evolving Balance of Power 1996-2017*. (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation). 2015.

satellites) was approved. The U.S. Armed Forces may now use the system for military and civilian use, such as for the Ground Laser Designator Station, a high-power laser system that can block the optical sensors of Chinese satellites. Despite this progress, and although the United States leads China in using satellites for Earth-based operations, U.S. anti-satellite capability is still developing.

For Japan, policy synchronization is key. The Aerospace Basic Act was passed in 2008; the Basic Plan on Space Policy was decided in 2013; and the Basic Plan on Space Policy was revised in 2015. This 2015 measure, which is highly relevant to JSDF operations in space, is a progressive plan for aerospace security reflecting the National Security Strategy; the Space Program Process Sheet was revised in December 2015 to help carry it out.

The Basic Plan of 2015 states that, “Through the strengthening cooperation between the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and the Ministry of Defense, space utilization will be conducted for national security.” About “X-band communications satellites,” it states that, “Japan will make steady progress in the development of X-band communications satellites and enhance JSDF command and control capability and information and communications capability.” The Basic Plan also addresses programs regarding space situation awareness (SSA), maritime situation awareness (MSA), “early-warning satellites,” “enhancing survivability of aerospace systems as a whole,” “a small agile satellites launch system,” “response to hindrance to the signal of positioning satellites,” and “the realization and consolidation of the rule of law in aerospace.”

The JSDF must aggressively develop operations to respond to an opponent’s attack on Japanese satellites. Therefore, Japan must prepare for attacks on satellites in both hostile and gray-zone situations, by developing an adequate number of satellites, cooperating with JAXA, collaborating with private satellite companies, utilizing unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), and developing satellite-launching facilities and communication satellites resistant to jamming.

Finally, Japan must have the capability not only to launch an anti-satellite attack but also to prevent a first attack from an opponent country. For example, the Standard Missile-3 (SM-3), which the JMSDF holds, can be used as an anti-satellite weapon. (Theoretically, the SM-3 can be used just as well as an anti-ballistic missile.) Also, through the advancement of a high-power laser weapon, Japan would increase its capabilities to respond to ballistic missiles and aircraft and be capable of blocking an opponent’s optical sensor and satellite communications. In all of this, collaboration with the United States is extremely significant. As the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation stated in April 2015, U.S.–Japan space cooperation should proceed, especially, in the fields of SSA, MSA, and space system survivability. In addition, countries located along Japan’s sea lanes

of communication, including European Union members, Middle East countries, and neighbors, are important partners, as well.

Conclusion

We have examined the history of the JSDF from the perspective of the U.S.–Japan. In the Cold War era, under U.S. containment strategy, the JSDF certainly existed as an effective deterrent power against the Soviet Union Armed Forces. As a result, Japan greatly helped to sustain and expand the alliance. Since the Cold War ended, Japan’s activities as a U.S. ally have further expanded to include support for international peace and stability. Within the JSDF, the JMSDF and JASDF have assisted U.S. defensive operations against ballistic missiles. JMSDF’s responses to international terrorism and anti-piracy activities have also led to closer Japan-U.S. security relationships. In the new security environment, in which responses to the rise of China and international terrorism are demanded, the alliance will continue to develop.

The JSDF has worked tightly with the U.S. Armed Forces and built a sense of unity for more than half a century. Japan-U.S. security policies discussed at multiple levels and in diverse venues, including Japan-U.S. summit meetings, defense summit meetings between ministers, security consultative committees, and senior officials’ meetings. In addition, JSDF chiefs of staff continually exchange ideas and information with U.S. counterparts. Experts’ conferences and educational exchanges have also enabled personnel in the U.S. Armed Forces and JSDF to build bridges of respect, understanding, and loyalty.

According to Japan’s domestic laws, the JSDF is an administrative and defense-only organization, not an “armed force.” Indeed, the JSDF has never broken the law, and conducts its missions within the Japanese legal framework, which restricts the JSDF to policing activities and is unclear about “contingent situations.” Thus, within this framework, the JSDF cannot be expected to operate as a true national defense organization, yet in this international security environment, there is increasing pressure for the JSDF to operate more like other countries’ armed forces. As a result, there is a clear disparity between Japan’s domestic laws and reality, when it comes to the JASDF’s missions to scramble in response to airspace provocations.

Therefore, to address this disparity and further the progress of the U.S.–Japan alliance, it is important for the JSDF to stop waiting passively for the U.S. Armed Forces to decide Japan’s roles and responsibilities. Japan must do its own thinking about how it can best contribute to the alliance, and how it should use its defensive force, based on global standards, to fulfill its missions and meet both today’s threats and future contingency situations.

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