



THE NEW NATIONAL DEFENSE PROGRAM GUIDELINES: ALIGNING U.S. AND JAPANESE DEFENSE STRATEGIES FOR THE THIRD POST-COLD WAR ERA

Edited by James L. Schoff and Sayuri Romei



SASAKAWA USA
Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA

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Sasakawa USA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit located in Washington, D.C. involved in U.S.-Japan relations, providing conferences and seminars, think tank analysis, people-to-people exchanges and coordination of high-level dialogue between the two countries through our in-house and collaborative programs.

Cover photograph: Japan Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers prepare to enter the well deck of the amphibious transport dock ship USS Somerset (LPD 25) in a combat rubber raiding craft during Exercise Iron Fist 2019. Exercise Iron Fist 2019 is an annual, multi-lateral training exercise where U.S. and Japanese service members train together, share techniques, tactics and procedures to improve their combine operational capabilities. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Devin M. Langer.) The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

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Contents

Abbreviations..... vii

Introduction 1
James L. Schoff and Sayuri Romei

Operational Aspects of Japan’s 2018 NDPG 7
Koichi Isobe

Japan’s New NDPG and MTDP: An American Perspective on
Operational Issues and Implications..... 13
Eric Heginbotham

Policy Implications of Japan’s New NDPG..... 21
Masanori Nishi

Strategic Alignment Prepares Japan-U.S. Alliance for Future Cooperation 27
Kaleb Redden and Nina Wagner

Appendix..... 31

About the Authors..... 33

Abbreviations

ASDF: Air Self-Defense Force
ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASW: Anti-Submarine Warfare
ATLA: Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Agency
A2/AD: Anti Access/Area Denial
BMD: Ballistic Missile Defense
DDH: Destroyer-Carrying Helicopter
DPRK: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
FDO: Flexible deterrence option
Fintech: Financial technology
GDP: Gross domestic product
GOJ: Government of Japan
GSDF: Ground Self-Defense Force
INDOPACOM: United States Indo-Pacific Command
IoT: Internet of Things
ISR: Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
JCS: Joint Chiefs of Staff
JASSM-ER: a U.S. air-launched land-attack cruise missile
JASDF: Japan Air Self-Defense Force
JSM: Joint Strike Missile
JSO: Joint Staff Office
LCU: Landing craft utility
LRASM: Long Range Anti-Ship Missile
LSV: Logistical support vessel
MOD: Ministry of Defense
MSDF: Maritime Self-Defense Force
MTDP: Mid-Term Defense Program
NDPG: National Defense Program Guidelines
NDS: National Defense Strategy
NSC: National Security Council
NSS: National Security Secretariat
PFI: Private finance initiative
PJHQ: Permanent Joint Headquarters
PLA: People's Liberation Army
PLAN: People's Liberation Army Navy
ROK: Republic of Korea
SDF: Self-Defense Forces
STOVL: Short take-off vertical landing

UAV: Unmanned aerial vehicle

UUV: Autonomous underwater vehicle

USFJ: United States Forces Japan

USFK: United States Forces Korea

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Introduction

James L. Schoff and Sayuri Romei

The Japanese government's preparation of National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) used to be a rarity, occurring just twice in the first half-century after Japan established its Self-Defense Forces (SDF) in 1954. The post-Cold War security and political environment, however, has been more fluid and has stimulated frequent revision of this Cabinet-approved document, which sets the direction for defense policy and budgeting. The latest revision in December 2018 was the fourth time in the past fifteen years, and it represents a coda for significant defense policy changes that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe engineered during his tenure since 2012, such as liberalizing rules for military equipment exports, introducing a limited form of collective self-defense, and expanding the scope of possible SDF missions, among others.

Until this latest iteration, NDPG revision acquired a ceremonial quality that began with the appointment by the Prime Minister of a blue-ribbon panel of scholars and experts to consider prevailing trends and possible responses by Japan. A key goal was to recommend policy adjustments that would address changing conditions but still respect legal precedent—in particular Article 9 of the Constitution prohibiting “war potential”—and a general policy of spending no more than one percent of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) on defense. By going through this process, before the government compiled its own version for the Cabinet to approve, new (and sometimes controversial) proposals could be scrutinized by civilian experts and perhaps tested publicly, which helped legitimize the final product.

The new NDPG, however, was the first one prepared under a more powerful National Security Council (NSC) structure—launched in 2014—which allowed for a centralized interagency process under direction of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Secretariat. In addition, preparation time for the NDPG was condensed, in order to stay in synch with a new five-year defense budget plan called the Mid-Term Defense Program (MTDP) that was expiring at the end of 2018. The MTDP is a relatively detailed “shopping list” for Japan's three branches of the SDF, so it was preferable for policy consensus to drive procurement decisions. This made a streamlined NSC-led revision method all the more appealing, instead of enlisting a blue-ribbon panel, and it is likely to become a new precedent.

Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace decided to explore these new characteristics of the 2018 NDPG and address the potential cooperation opportunities that the new defense document was bringing to the U.S.-Japan alliance. What regional and global factors drove the new NDPG? What are the key elements of the new document? How will Japan effectively implement these guidelines? Those were some of the questions at the base of this project, which included an off-the-record specialists' roundtable and a public event in January 2019 in Washington, D.C., where four experts tackled the operational and policy aspects of the new NDPG. This volume, *The New National Defense Program Guidelines: Aligning U.S. and Japanese*

Defense Strategies for the Third Post-Cold War Era, offers analyses by these four experts, each approaching the issue from a different angle.

In “Operational Aspects of Japan’s 2018 NDPG,” Lt. Gen. Koichi Isobe (ret., former Ground Self-Defense Forces) examines the key challenges for Japan in implementing the new NDPG in the increasingly volatile regional security environment. Isobe argues that we are witnessing a return of traditional geopolitical rivalries among the states in North-east Asia, and he analyzes the new emerging challenges in non-traditional domains.

In “Japan’s New NDPG and MTDP: An American Perspective on Operational Issues and Implications,” Eric Heginbotham (Principal Research Scientist, Massachusetts Institute of Technology) focuses on the progress made with the new document as well as the outstanding issues that Japan is still struggling to address, such as developing a truly joint SDF and clarifying its military strategy.

In his essay “Policy Implications of Japan’s New NDPG,” Masanori Nishi (former Japanese Vice Minister of Defense) explores the global changes in the post-Cold War security environment that stimulated adjustments to Japan’s defense policy. In response to the constant development of security challenges, Nishi proposes that Japan and other U.S. allies in the region cooperate and step up to contribute to the stability of the region.

Lastly, in “Strategic Alignment Prepares Japan-U.S. Alliance for Future Cooperation,” Kaleb Redden (Office of the Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense), with co-author Nina Wagner (Acting Chief of Staff, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities), draws a parallel between the United States’ National Defense Strategy and Japan’s NDPG. They identify the common challenges faced by the two allies, and emphasize the cooperation opportunities between the United States and Japan.

The private and public discussions that Sasakawa USA and Carnegie Endowment hosted in Washington, D.C., in early 2019 further contributed to the following section of this Introduction, in which we will offer an overview of the salient elements and the new concepts introduced by Japan’s new NDPG.

To read a provisional translation in English of the NDPG, visit the Ministry of Defense’s website: https://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/d_policy/national.html.

Highlights of Japan’s Revised National Defense Program Guidelines

U.S. policy makers have generally praised Japan’s revised NDPG for focusing on areas that both sides believe need attention: 1) facilitating integration and seamless coordination (so-called jointness) among the three services of Japan’s SDF; 2) improving the ability of the SDF and U.S. military to communicate and work together (interoperability); 3) investing in new domains in cyber space and outer space; and 4) making a solid (if only modestly increased) five-year defense budget commitment.

In addition, the new NDPG allows for a more flexible approach to operations in new domains, introducing the concept of disruption (*samatage*, 妨げ) so that Japan’s SDF can take active steps to hinder an opponent’s cyber, space, or electronic operations against Japan as a legitimate form of self-defense. This is a more realistic approach to securing defense in these areas and should bolster deterrence overall.

Japan also plans to invest in capabilities that should significantly improve operational flexibility and strengthen Japan’s ability to defend itself in the East China Sea, featuring a major new commitment to the F-35 fighter aircraft platform with plans to

buy forty-two of the short take-off vertical landing (STOVL) aircraft and up to sixty more of the standard type than originally intended. The SDF will also improve its ability to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations with new planes and unmanned air and underwater systems, as well as better integrate its ISR assets so that they become a more seamless network across the services. Additionally, in order to keep pace with improving Chinese long-range attack capabilities in the East China Sea, Japan will acquire its own “stand-off” missiles so that it can defend its territory from safer distances.

With regard to strengthening U.S.-Japan security cooperation, Japan’s new NDPG is ambitious, with some elements still needing further clarification.

Japan wants to “expand and deepen cooperation” across seemingly all facets of defense including “space and cyber domains, comprehensive air and missile defense, bilateral training and exercises, bilateral ISR operations, and bilateral flexible deterrence options (FDOs),” as well as logistics and asset protection operations. This would cut across all phases (from peacetime to armed conflict) and “involving all relevant organizations,” so it is not limited to Japan’s Ministry of Defense (MOD) and the U.S. Department of Defense, and would presumably include the intelligence services, Japan Coast Guard, the National Police Agency, Ministry of Transportation, and possibly others. The allies will need to prioritize their efforts in these areas, because it will be hard to accomplish all of this simultaneously.

The revised NDPG does identify some priorities in Section IV, but they involve a collection of different approaches to emerging challenges that will probably require some trial and error before settling on the most effective arrangement. The NDPG outlines a mix of coordination methods, in some cases utilizing integrated SDF units, centralized coordination by the Joint Staff Office (JSO), and joint units that rely heavily on a lead service, so this could complicate alliance cooperation until efficient patterns are established and well understood by both sides. Among these different approaches:

- The SDF will invest to leverage the space domain for info-gathering, communications, and positioning capabilities. Part of this includes building a structure to conduct persistent ground-and space-based situation monitoring. Space is supposed to benefit from a joint approach to operations, but apparently the only space-specialized unit will be in the Air SDF (ASDF). A team of ASDF officers will attend the U.S. Air Force Space Operations Course, as part of the plan to build capacity in this area and enhance interoperability with the United States.
- Cyber will be an “integrated unit” to manage monitoring and disruption. Presumably this will be a fully joint team from all three services, though how it might coordinate with civilian agencies that deal with cyber threats is not clear yet. It is also not clear how the cyber command center might be integrated with other types of air or maritime missions.
- The JSO will strengthen its office to manage and coordinate the use of electromagnetic spectrum, with each service collecting its own information and sharing it via the JSO.
- The SDF will build a “comprehensive” air and missile defense capability comprising Ground SDF, Maritime SDF, and Air SDF, each with their own tracking and air defense or anti-missile assets. The NDPG says that the SDF will work toward integration of these systems, but the exact process will be developed in the future.

- Also, MOD/SDF “will enhance collaboration with the relevant agencies” for information sharing, so the goal is to have a “whole-of-government” (seifu ittai, 政府一体) effort. What this means in practice with regard to information sharing and combined analysis with the Cabinet Satellite Intelligence Center and with U.S. agencies, however, is yet to be determined.
- Despite these and other efforts to enhance jointness within the SDF, retired GSDF Lt. Gen. Isobe notes in his paper that the revised NDPG was not as aggressive as it could be with regard to establishing a joint command office. Instead, the decision was made to “strengthen JSO’s posture” in new domains but left “examining a future framework for joint operation” till later. It is possible that the compressed NDPG revision schedule made it too difficult to design such a significant change to the command structure.

Another important issue to follow for the future is how Japanese politicians and bureaucrats handle the development of policy and doctrine that governs the use of stand-off weapons and tools of “disruption” for cyberspace, electronic warfare, and outer space. The NDPG language appears carefully crafted and raises questions about how it can be implemented in practical terms.

- For example, Japan’s disruption against an opponent’s ability to use cyberspace is allowed “during an attack against Japan,” but there is a lot of ambiguity regarding what constitutes an “attack,” how to attribute responsibility for the attack, and what are the best measures of response. The Japanese government will have to decide how these judgements and decisions will be made, and how this might be coordinated with U.S. officials.
- With regard to the electromagnetic spectrum, the SDF will aim to “neutralize radar and communications of an opponent who intends to invade Japan,” so there are similar questions here about judging intent and determining an appropriate response that supports deterrence without leading to unwanted escalation.
- The use of stand-off weapons is reserved for dealing with “ships and landing forces attempting to invade Japan,” but doctrine governing their use will have to be developed. Some analysts thought that this new NDPG might open the door to using these kinds of stand-off weapons for counter-striking enemy missile bases and related infrastructure as a way to inhibit further attack, but instead the NDPG states that this is something Japan will “continue to study.”

Finally, even though the new NDPG and MTDP make a five-year defense spending commitment of about ¥26 trillion (~\$239 billion or \$48 billion/year), there are many in the United States who wonder if this will be enough to fund sufficiently all of the priorities laid out in the revised guidelines. Purchasing new missile defense assets and supporting such a large F-35 fighter aircraft fleet could strain the budget, especially with investment in new domains and other priorities. Acquiring and operating expensive military aircraft, ships, and other equipment is boosting the amount of obligatory outlays as a percentage of the overall procurement budget. The figure stood at roughly 35% in fiscal year 2016 but has risen to 40% in 2019, and it appears to be still rising. These commitments could crowd out future investment in defense systems and are making it harder for Japan’s defense industry to compete with the high-end systems imported from the United States.

For this collaborative project, one underlying assumption is that the U.S.-Japan alliance is entering what can be considered a “Third Post-Cold War Era,” following an initial era of U.S. primacy and efforts at global peacekeeping in places like Kosovo, and then a second phase dubbed the Global War on Terror after the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States. The precise starting point and trajectory for this third era is not clear, but it is characterized by a return to long-term strategic competition in Asia and Europe as a primary concern with both high-end conventional military aspects and lower-level hybrid warfare or “gray zone” conflict involving new domains of cyber space and outer space. To some extent, this represents a rejoining of U.S. and Japanese defense priorities in Asia that has been absent since the Cold War. North Korea was of course a common security concern throughout much of the post-Cold War period, but it is now part of a broader realignment of military challenges that impact the allies in similar ways. This is what makes Japan’s new NDPG so important to both countries.

Operational Aspects of Japan's 2018 NDPG

Koichi Isobe

On August 29, 2018, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe held the first meeting of the Advisory Panel on Security and Defense Capabilities at the Prime Minister's Office. He stated: "The security environment of Japan is becoming more severe and increasingly uncertain at a pace far faster than was expected five years ago when the current National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) was formulated. We are not able to protect Japan from the range of threats if we are thinking only through the conventional lens of the ground, maritime, and air defense categories. We need to identify an ideal form of defense capabilities that is truly needed to protect Japan, rather than developing them along the current path."¹

This realization became the key trigger for the review of the NDPG. In this paper, I will focus on three issues: 1) the key challenges facing Japan in consideration of Prime Minister Abe's statement; 2) how well the new NDPG addresses those challenges, and finally; 3) key priorities for implementation of the NDPG, in the exponentially uncertain security environment.

What are the key challenges facing Japan?

In this section, I will discuss the two key challenges that Japan is facing today: the traditional and fundamental geostrategic challenge of the region, and the new emerging challenge of outer space and cyber space. In addition to these, I will briefly touch upon a recurring challenge for Japan: various natural disasters.

Prime Minister Abe's words 'becoming more severe and increasingly uncertain' can be interpreted as a return of traditional geopolitical rivalries among the states of North-east Asia.

The most prominent feature of Japan's geography is that the country occupies the 3,500-kilometer (2,200-mile) arc-shaped island chain off the east coast of the Eurasian Continent. The Japanese Archipelago is strategically situated in the position that controls exits toward the Pacific Ocean from the Eurasian Continent. Based on this geographical feature, Japan has historically always paid attention to three strategic fronts: the North, the Korean Peninsula, and the Southwest Islands.

Since the Meiji Restoration, Japan's strategy has focused on one strategic front at a time, while others are relatively dormant. Japan has been interacting with neighboring countries, through bilateral relationships. However, since the 2010s, all three fronts have become increasingly tense simultaneously. Japan has never experienced such a situation before.

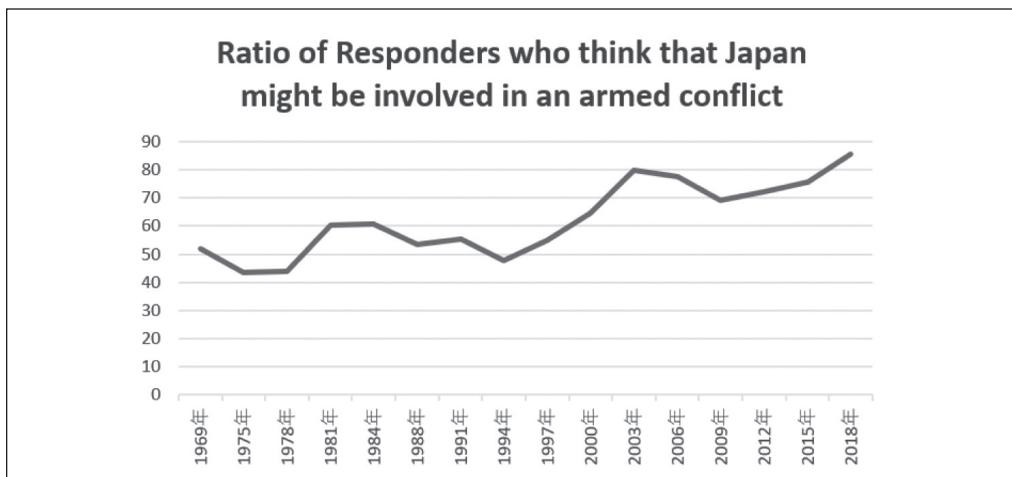
¹ The Japanese Prime Minister's Office website, https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98_abe/actions/201808/_00043.html (Accessed on December 24, 2018).

For example, on September 7, 2010, a Chinese fishing boat collided with a Japanese Coast Guard vessel in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands.² China imposed strong pressure on Japan in order to make the Japanese Government release the Chinese captain of the trawler. Namely, the Chinese government decided to ban exports of rare earth metals to Japan, and employees of Fujita Corp. were detained by Chinese authorities. This incident became the first and typical example of “Chinese authorities using private sector activities as hostage.”³

Two months after the collision off the Senkaku, on November 1, then Russian President Dmitry Medvedev landed at Kunashir Island, one of the Northern Territories, which Japan claims as its inherent territories. It was the first time that a Russian head of state visited the Northern Territories. While Japan was struggling with the aftermath of the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake, Medvedev visited the same island again as Russian Prime Minister in July 2012. One month after Medvedev’s Kunashir visit, on August 10, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak landed on the Takeshima Islands, which Japan claims as inherent territory.

The 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy describes four countries as revisionist powers or rogue states: China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran. Uniquely among the hotspots of the world, three of those exist in Northeast Asia and are Japan’s neighbors. The drastic geostrategic change in this region is occurring in conjunction with economic development. Japan has been facing challenges and provocations from those countries simultaneously.

This fundamental change cannot be expressed as “increasingly severe”—in fact, it would not be exaggerated to call it a “geostrategic diastrophism.” This is the first recognition of the regional security environment: traditional geopolitics have come back in the region.



² *The Asahi Shimbun*, p. 9, “Junshisen 2 seki to chuūgokugyosen seshoku Senkakushotō” (Japanese Coast Guard’s two patrol vessels collide with Chinese Fishing Boat), September 7, 2010.

³ *Nikkei online*, “Tamesareta Nihon no ‘chiseigaku’ risuku” (Tested Japan’s geopolitical risks), September 27, 2010.

The Japanese public shares similar views regarding the mounting military tensions surrounding Japan. The latest public opinion survey of 2018 marks the highest point in the last fifty years, which means 86% of the responders thinks that Japan might be involved in an armed conflict in the future. During the 20th century, such concern had been around 50%, but it has gradually increased to over 80% in the 21st century.⁴

The second challenge is new emerging threats in non-traditional domains. These are cyber space and outer space. These threats have specific features: invisible, borderless, instant, and have serious impacts on our daily social lives. Cyber-attacks directed at critical infrastructure, supply chains, the Internet of Things (IoT), and financial technology (Fintech) have occurred daily both inside and outside Japan. These attacks cause direct financial losses and interruption of businesses and services in addition to the usual data breach. The attacks also serve to threaten safety and security of the sustainable development of socio-economic activities. There have been massive incidents suspected to have been state-sponsored including the so-called WannaCry attacks of 2017.⁵

The Government of Japan (GOJ)'s 'Cybersecurity Strategy' notes, "serious impacts may occur not only for governmental bodies and critical infrastructure operators, but for other businesses and even individuals."⁶

In addition to these challenges, it is appropriate to point out a recurring issue. Japan has been suffering various natural disasters such as heavy rainfalls, typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions. In 2011, the world witnessed a huge earthquake and unprecedented tsunami waves in Eastern Japan. Statistics show that 20% of worldwide earthquakes with 6.0 Richter Scale or above occur in Japan, and 7% of active volcanoes of the world exist in Japan. Responding to these natural disasters is one of the major roles for the Self-Defense Force.

In conclusion, Japan is facing these three challenges: the traditional geopolitical challenges from neighboring countries, the emerging challenges in space and cyber space, and diverse natural disasters.

How well does the new proposed NDPG address those issues?

The new NDPG has three basic ideas on how Japan should respond to these challenges.

Firstly, from a temporal perspective, the NDPG stresses 'seamless' responses to any crises or contingencies. In other words, Japan would respond to challenges from peacetime to gray-zone then to conflict.

Secondly, from a spatial perspective, Japan would respond to not only traditional domains but also new emerging domains. Furthermore, the Self-Defense Force (SDF) would respond to these challenges through "cross-domain operations."

In addition to those, the NDPG attaches importance on the whole-of-government approach. These three features are vividly highlighted in the new document.

⁴ The Cabinet Office, "The Public Opinion Survey on the Self-Defense Forces and Defense Issues," March 2018: <https://survey.gov-online.go.jp/h29/h29-bouei/gairyaku.pdf>.

⁵ *Reuters*, "U.S. charges North Korean hacker in Sony, WannaCry cyberattacks," September 6, 2018: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cyber-northkorea-sony/u-s-charges-north-korean-hacker-in-sony-wannacry-cyberattacks-idUSKCN1LM20W>.

⁶ National Center of Incident Readiness and Strategy for Cybersecurity, Cabinet Secretariat, the Government of Japan, "Cybersecurity Strategy," p. 7, July 27, 2018.

Based upon the recognition mentioned in the NDPG’s Section I, let us consider how well the NDPG addresses these challenges.

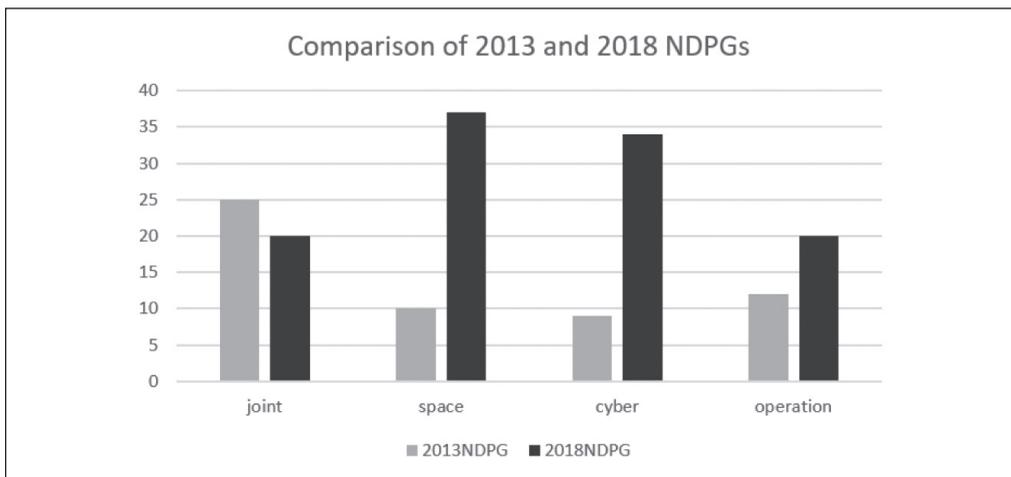
The NDPG crystalizes the new emerging threats:

“The security environment surrounding Japan is changing at an extremely rapid pace. Changes in the power balance of the international community are accelerating. In addition, the rapid expansion of new areas such as space, cyber space, and electromagnetic waves is fundamentally changing the way the nation’s security has been focused in dealing with land, sea, and air.”

With regard to cyber, in the Section IV ‘Priority for Strengthening Defense Capabilities,’ the guidelines say that “in the event of an emergency, the Ministry of Defense shall drastically strengthen cyber space capabilities, such as the ability to prevent and disrupt the use of cyberspace by other parties in an attack towards Japan.” This sentence implicitly means that the SDF might possess attack capability in cyber space. However, the guidelines do not clarify to what extent the SDF could respond to cyber-attacks on civilian-sectors infrastructure.

As for natural disasters, the guidelines state that “Japan is prone to natural disasters that exact heavy damage. Industry, population and information infrastructure concentrate in Japan’s urban areas, and a large number of critical facilities such as nuclear power plants are located in coastal areas.”

The chart shows the comparison of the 2013 and the 2018 NDPG and the use of the words “joint,” “space,” “cyber,” and “operation” in both documents. These diagrams clearly indicate that in the new document, the words “space” and “cyber” are used three times more frequently compared to the previous document. The new guidelines thus address this changing security environment, as mentioned in the earlier section.



From an operational perspective, resiliency and continuity are also important factors for the accomplishment of a mission. The guidelines stress indeed that “SDF will take necessary measures for securing ammunition and fuel, ensuring maritime shipping lanes, and protecting important infrastructure. In particular, while cooperating with relevant ministries and agencies, SDF will improve sustainability through safe and steady acquisition and stockpiling of ammunition and fuel. SDF will also improve resiliency in a

multi-layered way through efforts including dispersion, recovery, and substitution of infrastructure and other foundations for SDF operations.”

What are the key priorities for the implementation of the NDPG?

1. Further improving the joint operational posture: establishment of a Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ)

From an operational point of view, it is disappointing that the new guidelines do not touch upon the establishment of the Permanent Joint Headquarters of the SDF. It simply notes to “study how to integrate operations in the future.”

Based on the lessons learned from the Great Eastern Japan Disaster of 2011, it is obvious that the SDF needed a permanent joint headquarters. As the security environment surrounding Japan has become more severe since 2011, the strengthened joint operational capability is imperative for mission accomplishment. At present, the Japanese Joint Chief interacts with three counterparts of U.S. military leaders; the Pentagon’s Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Hawaii’s Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) Commander, and the U.S. Forces Japan Commander at Yokota Air Force Base in Japan. When crises occur, it is almost impossible for the Japanese Joint Chief to discuss and respond to both politico-military and operational issues simultaneously. If the PJHQ was established in the SDF, it could become a real counterpart of the U.S. INDOPACOM from an operational perspective.

2. Strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance

First, the SDF should strengthen the operational linkage with INDOPACOM. As noted before, the SDF command and control structure should be better aligned to the U.S. structure in Hawaii.

Second, the development of bilateral operations plans in every possible scenario ranging from peacetime to gray-zone, gray-zone to contingencies, is critical for both prevention and bilateral actions, and eventually for the stability of Northeast Asia.

Third, as the SDF is going to introduce many U.S. weapon systems such as Aegis Ashore, F-35B, Global Hawk, etc., drastic improvement of interoperability is urgent, especially in the areas of command and control.

Fourth, the SDF and the INDOPACOM can work more closely together toward forming a regional cooperative effort; coordinated operations in the East and South China Seas, capacity building efforts in the Indo-Pacific region, and deepening the relationship with like-minded countries such as Australia, India, and others.

3. Strengthening the Southwest Islands’ defense posture

As for strengthening the Southwest Islands’ defense posture, the GOJ should develop an overall strategy on how to secure them. As the guidelines stress the importance of the whole-of-government approach and the seamless approach, in securing the Southwest Islands’ sovereignty, the GOJ needs to strengthen these kinds of approaches. The guidelines reiterate “the government shall make integrated efforts with not only the Ministry of Defense and the SDF, but also with relevant agencies, local organization and private organizations, and shall build up a defense system that integrates the capabilities of Japan.” It is high time for the government to develop a comprehensive Southwest

Islands' security strategy, involving not only the Ministry of Defense and the SDF, but also other relevant agencies such as the Coast Guard and the Police. This effort would surely enhance the seamless response to provocations. To ensure a successful defense posture of this region, collaboration with the U.S. Forces is also encouraged, such as bilateral patrols and exercises.

Second, the SDF is going to introduce various weapon systems, such as UAV and UUV systems, Surface to Ship Missile systems, high-speed glider missile systems, the multifunctional escort vessel Izumo, and F-35Bs. To align these various weapon systems into a same direction or objective, the SDF, especially the Joint Staff, shall develop a doctrine to deter and fight in this theater. In this theater, furthermore, joint operational posture is indispensable for the Southwest Islands' defense.

Lastly, as pointed out in the guidelines, those areas of resiliency of defense infrastructures, rapid runway recovery capability, and designating alternate military airfields, securing lines of communication to remote islands, and stockpiling ammunitions, are critically important for sustainable operations.

4. Tackling new emerging domains

There exist many issues in crafting the way the SDF should respond to the new emerging domains. First, in order to strengthen the space and cyber capability, the SDF would need drastic human augmentation. Recruiting those who possess expertise of space and cyber space is very competitive and difficult. The SDF should explore diverse recruiting measures to acquire them. Another consideration is the legal framework. Establishing a legal framework will allow the SDF to respond appropriately to these new challenges.

5. Reviewing the GOJ's strategy development process

Some particular aspects of the 2018 guidelines stand out as differing from previous guidelines.

Japan's first National Security Strategy and the previous NDPG were adopted by the Cabinet meeting on the same day, December 17, 2013. One month later, the National Security Secretariat (NSS) was established on January 7, 2014.

The 2018 guidelines was developed for the first time since the establishment of the National Security Secretariat. It is necessary for the GOJ to review the development process to determine to what degree the NSS was involved.

The second aspect is that while the NDPG was revised based on the newly emerging challenges of the security environment, the National Security Strategy remains intact.

In the United States, the strategy architecture is very clear and simple: National Security Strategy is developed by the President; National Defense Strategy is by the Secretary of Defense; and Military Strategy by the Joint Chief.

Japan, however, established the National Security Strategy for the first time in December 17, 2013, yet no one has seen Japan's Defense Strategy and Military Strategy. I believe it is about time for the Ministry of Defense to develop its Defense Strategy, and for the Joint Staff Office to develop its Military Strategy.

Japan's New NDPG and MTDP

An American Perspective on Operational Issues and Implications

Eric Heginbotham

The 2018 National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) and the Mid-Term Defense Plan (MTDP) are, in many ways, startling documents, filled with significant adjustments as well as a few conspicuous holes and new capabilities that have not been widely noted, much less debated. The adjustments appear prompted and shaped by a combination of the evolving threat, new institutional authors (having been written, for the first time, by Japan's National Security Council (NSC)), and bureaucratic interests and politics.

Some of the changes are clearly innovative and adaptive, including the emphasis on resilience, greater efforts towards cost effectiveness, and realism about the munitions requirements. At the same time, the documents do not adequately address some of Japan's most outstanding military weaknesses, including weak jointness and ambiguous military strategy. Finally, the documents embrace a wide variety of dramatic new offensive capabilities. Below, I briefly address some of the military challenges confronting the alliance, assess both progress and holes in the NDPG and MTDP, and outline a few outstanding questions about how the documents might be operationalized.

Context: U.S.-Japan alliance and security challenges

The U.S.-Japan alliance is, first and foremost, central to the defense of Japan, but it also serves broader regional and global functions. It is critically important in the defense of South Korea, since Japan's geography dominates surrounding waters and air approaches. Bases in Japan also provide the nearest substantial staging areas for any contingency in Taiwan and the South China Sea. Both Japanese and U.S. military assets operate in Southeast Asia, and Japanese rear area support would be critical in any of these areas. Finally, the capabilities of both countries also have global functions.

Given limited space, this paper focuses on challenges in Japan's immediate vicinity, especially potential conflict with China. Like its 2013 predecessor, the 2018 NDPG addresses the challenge posed by Chinese gray zone activities, but the 2018 places greater emphasis on the development of the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) conventional capabilities and the deterrence of high-intensity conflict. Conflict could start in various ways, and a small clash might, depending on circumstances, escalate to general conflict. Given the U.S. basing infrastructure in Japan, Sino-U.S. conflicts elsewhere might easily draw in Japan as those bases might become targets.

Whatever the initial locus of conflict, the challenges posed to the alliance in a high-intensity conflict would be significant.⁷ China, with an official defense budget three to four times the size of Japan's, has developed substantial military capability in all domains. It not only deploys substantial anti-access, area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities

⁷ For an assessment, see Eric Heginbotham et al., "U.S.-China Military Scorecard: Forces, Geography, and the Evolving Balance of Power, 1996-2017," RAND, 2016.

(missiles, submarines, and counter-space), but also potent conventional warfighting forces (including large numbers of modern fighters and warships). It is currently developing logistical and command and control force multipliers.

The Chinese military is not ten feet tall, and the alliance continues to enjoy advantages in training and operational competence.⁸ Nevertheless, China is narrowing the gap, and the geography of any conflict in Asia would partly neutralize allied qualitative advantages. In the most obvious sense, U.S. force would have to flow from thousands of miles away—giving the PLA quantitative advantages at the outset of conflict. Within the theater too, China's continental mass supports numerous air and missile bases within easy striking distance, while only a handful of U.S. and Japan's Air Self-Defense Forces (JASDF) bases are within range of many potential conflict areas.⁹

Chinese ballistic and cruise missiles would be the leading edge of a military chisel designed to crack defenses. Ballistic missiles are particularly problematic; active defenses could only be partially effective even under the best of circumstances, and they would be largely ineffective against organized attacks in salvos. Long-range cruise missiles and China's large inventory of 4th general fighter and attack aircraft (now numbering more than 850) might follow up once allied air defense systems are damaged or destroyed. All of these attacks would exacerbate the problem of geography by destroying or disrupting airbases and port facilities in critical areas.

Japan's defense problem is more acute in some parts of the archipelago than others. Positions on the Ryukyu Islands would be critical for U.S. forces operating around Taiwan, the Senkaku Islands, or in the South China Sea, but they are also highly vulnerable to direct attack. Ishigaki Island, for example, is about 500 km from China and would be within range of roughly 550 Chinese ballistic missiles, as well as hundreds (perhaps thousands) of cruise missiles—many more than could target positions on Japan's four main islands.¹⁰ At the same time, Ishigaki is 400 km from the nearest friendly airbases on Okinawa Island—and 1,000 km from Kyushu.

Chinese submarines and surface ships also pose challenges. Over the last five years, the PLA Navy (PLAN) has begun series production of destroyers and moved from a force comprised primarily of frigates to one organized around larger ships. Groups of surface vessels could act as floating air defense batteries near Japanese islands while still remaining within range of supporting Chinese aircraft. The PLAN's submarine fleet, now numbering more than 40 modern boats, might seek out U.S. or Japanese naval ships around outlying islands, complicating the task of reinforcing positions there.

⁸ For a qualitative assessment, see Roger Cliff, *China's Military Power: Assessing Current and Future Capabilities*, Cambridge University Press, 2015

⁹ For example, the Chinese air forces operate from some 29 bases within unrefueled fighter range of the Senkaku Islands, but only four U.S. and Japanese bases are within the same distance

¹⁰ The Yokota airbase, for example, is more than 1,000 km from the nearest Chinese territory. Ballistic missiles that can range Ishigaki include IRBMs (DF-26s), MRBMs (DF-21Cs), and some SRBMs (DF-15Bs and DF-16s), while only IRBMs and MRBMs are in range of Yokota.

How well do the NDPG and MTDP address these challenges?

The NDPG and MTDP can be evaluated several ways:

- To what extent are they likely to improve Japan's contribution to its own defense or that of the region, thereby reducing U.S. requirements?
- Is the implicit or explicit division of roles and missions appropriate?
- To what extent will measures taken facilitate U.S. operations?
- What effect will they have on alliance coordination?

Immediately below, several positive developments are outlined, followed by a discussion of several unresolved problems or questions with respect to direction.

Positive elements in the NDPG/MTDP

Focus on resilience (or strengthening “sustainability and durability” – *jizokusei*, 持続性, *kyōjinsei*, 強靱性) [NDPG, p. 20]. A key principle in the NDPG is operational resilience, which U.S. strategists define as the ability to absorb attack and continue to generate combat power. The NDPG highlights the need to secure access to resupply (especially ammunition and fuel) and to ensure the proper function of infrastructure and maritime supply routes. It suggests three primary methods to strengthen resilience: dispersion (*bunsan*, 分散), recovery (*fukkyū*, 復旧), and redundancy (or substitution - *daitai*, 代替).

At the outset of a conflict, Japanese military forces would comprise the bulk of in-theater military elements, and their ability to survive attack while continuing the fight is arguably more important than their ability to inflict large-scale losses quickly. In a protracted fight, the allies would enjoy advantages as U.S. military power is mobilized, but deployment would depend on the persistence of functioning infrastructure and a viable partner.

Within the NDPG and MTDP, resilience is operationalized by increased munitions purchases, military infrastructure construction, runway repair improvements, air command and control elements, mobility and lift, and in legal measures to enable the use of civilian ports and airports during contingencies. The acquisition of additional tanker aircraft and the possible purchase of F-35Bs for use on Izumo-class DDHs or smaller runways, will also contribute to the ability to persevere through the first critical phases of a conflict.

Nevertheless, an important caveat should be noted: apart from C-2 aircraft, F-35s, and munitions—which can also be explained according to other motivations—Japan is spending relatively little on resilience.

Lift and mobility. The 2018 documents place considerable emphasis on improving lift and mobility [NDPG, p. 20]. Given the paucity of combat elements deployed to the outer islands during peacetime and their vulnerability to attack and degradation during wartime, lift is essential for Japan's ability to maintain its position over time. A joint maritime lift element will be formed. New classes of ships will be procured, including logistical support vessels (LSVs) and landing craft utility (LCU) vessels [MTDP, p. 13].¹¹ Japan will also strengthen what amounts to a civilian reserve fleet, acquired under

¹¹ Modern LSVs are around 4,000, while LCUs range between 150 and 1,000 tons.

private finance initiative (PFI) arrangement [Budget, p. 15]. And the JASDF will continue to acquire the C-2 cargo aircraft.

Greater attention to cost effectiveness. The 2018 NDPG explicitly recognizes that Japan cannot outspend its potential adversaries and that it will have to improve cost effectiveness. Several of the acquisition priorities suggest an implicit high-low strategy that combines some of the world's largest and most modern systems with smaller, lower cost systems for particular missions. Several examples:

- The Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF) will produce large Aegis-equipped destroyers (the improved Atago-class), while at the same time ordering eight “30FFM” (frigate multipurpose / mine) ships, largely to buttress anti-submarine warfare (ASW). These will be smaller and cheaper than previous ASW ships. [MTDP, p. 5].¹²
- The MSDF will also acquire a new class of 12 patrol ships (shōkaikan, 哨戒艦) [NDPG, 26; MTDP, 5]. These craft, likely about 1,000 tons each, may take on much of the grey zone mission, freeing major warships to prepare for high end conflict, hence enhancing deterrence.¹³
- Given their mobility, Aegis-equipped destroyers will remain critical in Japanese missile defense (BMD), but Aegis Ashore will provide a more cost-effective component of the overall effort [NDPG, 24; MTDP, 11].
- Emphasis on the use of civilian facilities and reform of procurement and maintenance practices also points towards greater cost consciousness.

Improving air and naval capability. The NDPG and MTDP emphasize that Japan must maintain capabilities to gain air and maritime superiority. The decision to replace roughly 100 additional older-model F-15s with F-35s will greatly strengthen air-to-air capability [MTDP, 9]. Thirteen E-2Ds will upgrade the JASDF's command and control, and four additional tanker aircraft (KC-46s) will enable fighters and the E-2Ds to remain on station longer [MTDP, pp. 5, 29]. In the maritime domain, additional major warships will be introduced. All of this should be kept in perspective; China is rapidly improving the quality of its forces while increasing their size; Japan is modernizing a force that will remain largely unchanged in size.

Other. Needless to say, there is much else in the 2018 documents that will contribute to the larger defense effort. Nothing receives more attention in the NDPG than cyber and space capabilities. Those capabilities, however, come with many questions attached and are therefore discussed below.

Missing elements or aspects open to question

Jointness. Most analysts agree Japan's defense effort suffers from weak jointness—an inability of the services and components to work together effectively.¹⁴ The 2018 NDPG

¹² The main fleet will be reorganized into four flotillas built around a single DDH and two Aegis-equipped ships each and two flotillas built around the 30FFM and other ships.

¹³ *Tokyo Defense and Aerospace Review*, “Jiki taikō, chūkibō de kaiji ni shōkaikan-butai wo sōsetsu,” (The New Guidelines: the MTDP will acquire patrol ships for the MSDF), December 19, 2018: <http://www.tokyo-dar.com/news/5073/>.

¹⁴ See, for example, Grant Newsham, “Japan's Military Has Some Serious Problems (As China's Military Gets Stronger),” *The National Interest*, September 7, 2016; Yuki Tatsumi, *Great Eastern Japan Earthquake: “Lessons Learned” for Japanese Defense Policy*, Stimson Center, November 2012; and Eric Heginbotham and Richard Samuels, “Defense Challenges: An Agenda for Japanese Military Reform,” *East Asia Forum*, September 20, 2018.

mentions the need to improve jointness, but it disappoints on specific content. In 2016, the chief of the joint staff, Admiral Katsutoshi Kawano, suggested that a permanent joint command (tōgōshireibu, 統合司令部) might be adopted, and December 2018 articles suggested that the NDPG Working Group was considering establishing a Joint Operations Office in the Joint Staff Office.¹⁵ Neither of these was mentioned in either the 2018 MTDP or the NDPG.

The NDPG does discuss cross-domain operations and includes some concrete measures, such as improving equipment commonality and interoperability between services and the establishment of two joint entities (a cyber unit and a maritime lift command). But while these joint elements constitute a “first,” they are not nearly adequate in and of themselves. The first, cyber, is an area where Japan currently has virtually no capability, while the second is an area where the dominant service, the Ground Self-Defense Forces (GSDF), stands to gain from the change [MTDP, p. 13]. The lack of important tangible measures, then, as well as the half-measures that were included, seems a product of bureaucratic bargaining more than strategic thought.

Japan’s Imperial Army. Under the NDPG, the GSDF continues its winning ways, consolidating its dominion within the SDF and gaining new capabilities that, in any other major archipelagic state, would go to one of the other services. Under the 2019 defense budget proposal, the GSDF’s budget will remain 68% larger than that of the JASDF and 51% larger than the JMSDF [Budget, p. 57].

Rather than rebalance the services’ budgets, new air and maritime-related missions are to be given to the GSDF, as they have been in the past. The GSDF already owns the Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade (marine corps) and almost half of Japan’s mid-range air defense capability, including the Chu-SAM, a domestic system with specifications that are almost identical with those of the JASDF’s Patriot, but which is only partly compatible with it. Under the new NDPG, the GSDF will be given the Aegis Ashore, despite the MSDF’s extensive experience with Aegis and the JASDF’s responsibility for air defense.

After years of study, the JASDF is poised to get standoff strike in the form of air-launched cruise missiles, and suddenly, under the new documents, the GSDF has been given ownership of a future ground-launched boost glide system. Although it is unclear from the 2018 documents who will own the new LSVs and LCUs, the GSDF has reportedly also made a bid for these assets.

GSDF dominance (and JASDF and MSDF suspicion of it) is almost certainly related to the lack of a standing joint command and weakness in the Joint Staff Office. It skews the SDF’s overall understanding of strategy—much of the Japanese thinking on outer island defense is colored by ground force proclivities—and it hampers the overall rationality in the allocation of resources. Where is the revolt of the admirals or air force generals, or, for that matter, of the taxpayers and media?

Multiple new offensive capability areas. Everything in the 2018 documents is, naturally, framed in terms of Japan’s exclusively defense-oriented policy (senshubōei, 専守

¹⁵ *Nikkei Shimbun*, “Jieitai, riku•kai•kū no tōgō kyōka e shin-soshiki yotō ga ōsuji ryōshō” (SDF: strengthening the integration of GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF – Ruling Party approves outline) December 7, 2018; *Sankei Shimbun*, “Tōgō shireibu jōsetsu wo kentō Jieitai toppu ga genkyū” (Considering Permanent Joint Headquarters, says top SDF official), *Sankei Shimbun*, March 1, 2016.

防衛). That notwithstanding, a hallmark of the 2018 documents is the number, variety, and destructive potential of offensive systems, including:

- Standoff missiles. Japan should, the NDPG states, “acquire standoff firepower to deal with adversary fleets and ground units that might attempt to invade Japanese territory, to include smaller islands, from beyond the [adversary] threat area.” [NDPG, 19; MTDP, 10-11]. Capabilities include:
 - JSM, a Norwegian air-launched cruise missile (CM), range of 550 km
 - JASSM-ER, a U.S. air-launched land-attack CM, range of 900 km
 - LRASM, a U.S. anti-ship CM, range estimate of 550 km
 - A domestic hypersonic “boost-glide” system lofted by ballistic missile
 - A hypersonic CM propelled by a scramjet
- Offensive cyber capability, defined as “the ability to disrupt the adversary’s ability to employ cyber space to attack.” [NDPG, 18]
- Counter-space. “To assure proper function [of space systems] and the ability to disrupt adversary command, control, and intelligence,” Japan will strengthen its “ability to secure advantage in the use of space.” [NDPG, p. 18]
- Aircraft carriers conversion. Of all the capabilities listed here, the conversion of Izumo-class DDHs to occasional aircraft carriers carrying F-35Bs is the least clearly offensive, although, as media attention suggests, it has at least some offensive potential.

While none of these systems suggests that Japan has either the intent or capability to wage an offensive war, they enable Japan to launch attacks on adversary bases and facilities and suggest an element of offensive operational planning. The United States has explicitly approved at least some of the systems listed above (and possibly all). But U.S. policymakers will now have to concern themselves with the escalatory potential these systems carry, especially if directed against the Chinese mainland.

Some of these capabilities will also increase coordination requirements. In the space and cyber domains, coordination will be hampered by the extreme secrecy and sensitivities. One can, for example, imagine cases where either Japan or the United States is monitoring an adversary system to gain intelligence and does not want it attacked—but may be unwilling or unable to share that information. U.S. and Japanese interests may not always align.

Strategy? The 2018 documents rhetorically endorse a continuation of the dynamic defense force concept, which is closely linked to countering grey zone activities. The documents list a variety of missions related to high intensity conflict, but they lack a coherent statement on broader military strategy. Air and maritime security is to be secured and the outer islands defended, but how? And in what sequence?

The discussion of resilience is certainly consistent with an exclusively-defense oriented policy (専守防衛)—including an “active denial strategy.”¹⁶ But on balance, it appears more money is being allocated to offensive systems than resilience, and some of Japan’s standoff strike choices raise questions about where the center of gravity lies.

¹⁶ Eric Heginbotham and Richard J. Samuels, “Active Denial: Redesigning Japan’s Response to China’s Military Challenge,” *International Security*, spring 2018. See also, Eric Heginbotham and Jacob L. Heim, “Deterring without Dominance: Discouraging Chinese Adventurism under Austerity,” *Washington Quarterly*, spring 2015.

Perhaps most prominent is the question of how standoff strike would be employed in the defense of the outer islands. With ranges of between 500 and 1,000 km, these systems are excessive (and excessively expensive) for attacks designed to destroy adversary forces that may have landed on Japanese islands. Using low-altitude ingress, adversary forces could be safely attacked from a distance of 100 km, with missiles that cost one-third that of the JASSM-ER.¹⁷ We may safely conclude that the JASSM-ER in particular is intended to provide options for attacking targets in mainland China.

Indicators to track going forward

Moving forward, we might track five groups of questions. First, what additional concrete measures to improve jointness, if any, will be adopted? Will a standing joint command be established? Will the joint staff office be strengthened? Will (additional) wargaming and analysis at the operational level be introduced to parse roles and missions for the services, or will bureaucratic compromise rule?

Second, will there be a debate on strategy and a more explicit discussion of where the emphasis lies? Will we see a fuller discussion of how Japan's new offensive capabilities might be employed? Should assuring maritime and air superiority assume clearer pride of place, or is the current emphasis on capabilities to counterattack and retake islands quickly appropriate?

Third, how much progress can be made in strengthening resilience? Can more assets be positioned in the Southwest Islands, or is the JSDF reaching a limit in its ability to strengthen capabilities southwest of Kyushu? To what extent will inventories of key munitions be increased? Maritime lift? Will hardening and deception be included in the definition of resilience, and if so, will monies be allocated?

Fourth, how much additional U.S.-Japan joint development and coordination will occur? To what extent can the two allies share information on technical aspects of their space and cyber programs, and how satisfactorily can they coordinate activities in those areas? There is substantial overlap between ongoing U.S. and Japanese efforts to develop hypersonic systems and space situational awareness. Will there be a division of labor or joint development and coordination?

And fifth, in those areas where little detail has thus far been provided, how will specific capabilities develop after 2019? What form will Japan's boost-glide systems take? What space functions will receive greatest emphasis? Will counter-space capabilities take the form of jamming, lasing, or something else? Will the Izumo-class DDHs, once equipped with F-35Bs, be used to sweep the Pacific side of Japan, add an additional layer of air defense behind the Ryukyu chain, or participate in counterattacks against occupied outer islands?

Conclusions

There is much to celebrate in the 2018 strategic documents. Japan is clearly more serious about generating real capabilities and using its limited funds to effect. That said, several outstanding issues remain, and this is clearly a work in progress. Problems with jointness

¹⁷ Against aircraft attacking at low altitude the radar horizon is a greater limiting factor than the maximum theoretical engagement envelope of the SAM system.

and questions about strategy—to include issues related to crisis stability as well as military efficacy—require further attention. Although beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to note that critical aspects of the U.S. military system, particularly command relationships with regard to the defense of Japan, are also legacies of a bygone era and equally influenced by a combination of inertia and bureaucratic politics. Given the growing challenges the alliance faces, careful strategic thought and decisive action will be imperative for both members of the alliance.

Policy Implications of Japan's New NDPG

Masanori Nishi

Introduction

The international system has been stable for the last seventy years. It was designed by the United States mostly for the purpose of recovery from World War II as well as to prevent another major international war. Japan enjoyed the benefits of this system and became the major ally of the United States in Northeast Asia by signing the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty in 1960.

After the end of the Cold War, we have seen many changes in the system, starting from the disintegration of the Soviet Union to the current trade war between the United States and the People's Republic of China (China). To discuss Japan's new National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG), it is necessary to see what changes we face now in the areas of security, politics, and economics.

Needless to say, the new NDPG itself cannot meet all these changes. However, it is meaningful to discuss Japan's security policy from such a wide viewpoint.

Security environment after the end of the Cold War

1. Economic aspect of the post-war system

The recovery from war damages was the most important purpose of the postwar economic system and the United States was its primary underwriter. It worked well. However, because of the success of the system, we are currently facing the growing difficulties of a world of excess.

No G-7 countries were damaged by wars since 1945. Adding to these countries' industrial power, there are other countries that have dramatically developed their industrial capability after the end of the Cold War: ASEAN countries, India and, most importantly, China. What we see now is that production capacity exceeds global demand. The production capacity of steel, for example, is about 40% greater than the demand from all over the world.¹⁸

Along with production capability, we see the surplus of money and its impact upon us. The U.S. dollar was linked to the gold standard until 1971 at the rate of 1 ounce of gold equivalent to \$35. Now, however, 1 ounce of gold is worth more than \$1200. This means that the total amount of U.S. dollars in the world is more than 30 times greater than that in 1971. This in turn means that the size of the global economy has expanded to that scale. The total amount of money in the world is, however, estimated at about \$90 trillion, almost 16% greater than the total GDP of the world. The Black Monday of

¹⁸ *Japan Metal Daily*, January 27, 2015. OECD Steel Committee report: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/science-and-technology/excess-capacity-in-the-global-steel-industry-and-the-implications-of-new-investment-projects_5js65x46nxhj-en%3bjsessionid=4cs3r2sgdqg81.x-oecd-live-01

1987, the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, and the Financial Crisis of 2007-2008 are all the result of monetary glut.¹⁹

Oversupply of both materials and money is the last thing that people could imagine when they designed the postwar system.

2. Military aspect

After the end of the Cold War, traditional causes of conflicts reappeared, such as territorial disputes and religious differences. In addition to that, terrorism on a massive scale emerged with 9.11. The simple bipolar international system from the Cold War era does not exist any longer.

Instead, there are three major powers with advanced nuclear capabilities confronting each other: the United States, Russia, and China. We do not have any clear definition of the trilateral relationship among them. It is possible to say that there exists a balance of power among them, but this only describes the present circumstances, leaving its future direction uncertain.

The concept of balance of power was developed in the 19th century. According to this concept, national security is enhanced when military capabilities are distributed so that no one state is strong enough to dominate all others.²⁰ This is not suitable to define the development of triangular relations. Due to the aforementioned possible difficult economic situation in the future, these powers will face their own economic difficulties and would not find it easy to maintain the balance with one another. Is it possible to apply this concept, which was developed when economies were expanding, to the current situation where economies are shrinking in a deflation spiral?

Due to its geostrategic position, Japan faces pressures from continental powers, namely Russia and China, as the bulwark on their path to the Pacific Ocean. After the development of the nuclear bomb, it became necessary for Japan to rely on the American extended deterrence for its security against two major nuclear powers on the continent. At the same time, the Korean Peninsula has historically been the major concern for the security of Japan. The DPRK is the newly emerging threat with missile and nuclear capabilities since the mid-1990s and it demands a serious adjustment of Japan's defense policy.

The Development of Japan's Defense Policy since 2010

1. Deteriorating security environment since the 1990s

When the DPRK announced its withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1994, the crisis started. The Japanese government found that there was almost nothing that the country could do to support U.S. military operations even for the sake of Japan's defense in case of a contingency on the Korean Peninsula. Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation (Guidelines) were revised in 1996 pointing out the possibility of a crisis over the Korean Peninsula. The revision then drove the formulation of an updated domestic legal framework for security. The "Situations in Areas Surrounding

¹⁹ *Nikkei Shimbun*, November 14, 2017

²⁰ Kegley, Charles W.; Wittkopf, Eugene R. (2005), *World Politics: Trends and Transformation (10th ed.)*, p. 503

Japan Law” was therefore passed by the Diet in 1998 to meet the reality pointed out by the Guidelines, which enables Japan to support the U.S. force in areas surrounding Japan.

Another difficult issue is China’s continuous military buildup. China’s military expenditure has become fifty-one times greater in the last thirty years.²¹ The U.S. controlled the crisis over the Taiwan Straits in 1996 by sending two carrier battle groups, however, if a contingency happens with China at this time, it will be more difficult to handle. No country could meet such a drastic military build-up. Due to fiscal constraints, Japan will have to adopt another way to enhance military capabilities, namely, enhance flexibility of its operational capability.

2. Adopting new measures of defense policy

After 9.11, Japan adopted various measures for cooperating with the United States. However, it was the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 that accelerated the joint coordination of the three services in Japan along with the enhanced bilateral coordination with the United States. The joint headquarters for the three services was established only three days after the earthquake for the first time in history, and the Japan-U.S. bilateral coordination office was also set up. These lessons were institutionalized through the revision of the bilateral Defense Guidelines in April 2015. The legal framework was also arranged by passing the Peace and Security law in September of the same year together with reorganizing the Ministry of Defense by establishing the new organization of Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) and enhancing the capability of operation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).

The new NDPG was adopted by the Cabinet in December 2018 along with the new midterm defense buildup program. These documents have crystalized past efforts into a new defense policy.

National Defense Program Guidelines

1. Threat perception in the 2018 NDPG

As discussed above, Japan faces pressure from continental powers due to its geostrategic location. After the summit meeting between the U.S. and the DPRK, the tensions over the Korean Peninsula cooled down, but it is not yet clear how North Korea’s nuclear and missile threats will develop in the future. Japan started investing in missile defense more than ten years ago driven by the DPRK missile development. Japan has enhanced that effort through the introduction of the Aegis Ashore System, though that was not mentioned in the previous five-year defense-buildup plan.

Although Russia has kept updating its military deployment in Japan’s Northern Territory, its major front remains the West, namely Europe. Russia’s problem on the Eastern front is the difference in population between Russia and China—6 million versus 100 million. Japan has kept diplomatic talks over outstanding territorial issues throughout the Abe administration and there is currently no urgent need for enhancing defense capability against Russia.

²¹ Minister Itsunori Onodera’s answers to the press on March 6th, 2018. Reported by the *Maimichi Shimbun* on the same day.

The most important issue is to find the way to coexist with China peacefully. Some in Japan say that the New Cold War has already started between the United States and China.²² The phrase “Cold War” is not an accurate description of the current U.S.-China relations because during the Cold War the Soviet Union was outside of the economic system led by the United States, whereas China today is inside the system with its huge GDP. It should also be noted that the military theory of the Soviet Union was similar to that of the United States, while China’s military theory is very different from the American one. China is currently the most difficult neighbor to coexist with.

The NDPG is clear about the threat perception through allocated lines of explanations for these three countries: five lines of text for Russia, 17 lines for the DPRK, and 30 lines for China.

2. What are the characteristics of the new plan?

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stated the difficult security environment around Japan in December 2017 and said that the new NDPG should not be based on a linear projection of the past evolution of Japanese defense policy.²³

The National Security Secretariat (NSS) was responsible for drafting the new document for the first time since it was established in January 2014. The NSS was created as the key organization to plan the national security policy under the direct control of the Prime Minister. We could see three major elements newly introduced to the NDPG thanks to the NSS initiative.

Firstly, the geostrategic concept of “free and open Indo-Pacific” was adopted. Prime Minister Abe proposed the “Security Diamond Concept” as early as 2007 in his first term. However, he did not have enough time to develop it due to his abrupt resignation for health reasons. The Indo-Pacific concept has been developed during his second term, starting in 2012, and is shared not only by the United States but also India, Australia, and other countries as a useful concept for a regional security framework.

Secondly, coordination and cooperation between the Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Forces (SDF) with other government agencies are encouraged in order to avoid having any gaps among them. It is important to keep in mind that the development from peace time to contingency is continuous. If government offices manage the case based on their own responsibility and do not have coordination with other offices, there would be a “Texas leaguer” (i.e. major) crisis.

Thirdly, newly emerging threats are focused, namely threats from outer space, cyber space, and electromagnetic waves. The NDPG states that these new factors should be shared with all services and be considered in conjunction with traditional threats from air, land, and sea. Indeed, “cross domain awareness” is the important concept in the document. It should be noted that, as Prime Minister Abe said, the new concept demands the traditional division of services of the SDF into air, ground, and maritime, should not be kept for the effective development of the defense policy. This means that the Joint

²² For example, see Genki Fujii (藤井 厳喜), [Beichū Shinreisen, dōsuru Nihon] 「米中新冷戦, どうする日本」 PHP Kenkyūjo, 2013

²³ Yuki Tatsumi, “Japan’s Defense Policy Decisions in 2018,” *The Diplomat*, January 3, 2019: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/01/japans-defense-policy-decisions-in-2018/>

Chiefs of Staff will be more responsible for designing the defense posture and the three services will work as the force providers to the JCS.

Japan's relations with the United States

After the end of the Vietnam War, the United States requested the so called “burden sharing” from its allies, particularly Japan and the Republic of Korea in Asia, in order to ease fiscal difficulties. Japan started paying the host nation support budget in 1978. The United States was still the dominant military power and its hub-and-spoke style security system worked well.

This security system started to change after the end of the Cold War due to the disappearance of the USSR. Japan had serious talks with the UK and Australia on how to encourage the United States not to retreat to the isolationism due to the end of the Cold War. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait ended all these efforts and Japan found the fiscal support was not enough as the contribution for securing the stability of the region.

Because of the War on Terror, it became important for the United States to gain support from the international community through the United Nations Security Council. The United States gradually slid down from the center position of the hub-and-spoke security system. Japan supported the U.S. effort not only from a diplomatic point of view but by sending warships to the Indian Ocean to support the U.S. operations.

Prime Minister Abe has taken initiatives to develop security policies since his second term started in 2012. The most difficult issue is China. The sovereignty issue over the Senkaku Islands cast a shadow on the bilateral relations since 2010 due to the clash between the Japanese Coast Guard and a Chinese trawler. Although the United States made it clear that Article 5 of the Security Treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands, due to the engagement policy, the U.S. took an appeasing attitude toward China during the Obama Administration. The focus was on China during the bilateral talks on the revision of the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation in 2014 and 2015. Unlike today, the United States was reluctant to point out China in the context of bilateral security concerns.

The difficult issue today in bilateral relations is President Trump's unpredictability on global security issues. He is not satisfied with the level of Japan's burden-sharing for the Japan-U.S. alliance. He is also unsatisfied with America's security commitment abroad in Afghanistan and Syria. At the same time, he is serious about enforcing international rules such as the ban of chemical weapons through bombing Syria.

President Trump is also bold in taking initiatives, such as holding summit meetings with the leader of the DPRK. After a tough posture towards the DPRK and growing tensions that would have escalated in military initiatives against North Korea, people felt relieved to hear this new and unexpected development.

In conjunction with the summit meeting between the United States and the DPRK, a number of U.S.-ROK joint exercises were cancelled, which weakened the U.S.-ROK security preparation. That resulted in an uneasy situation for U.S. friends and allies in East Asia. The status of the U.S. forces in the ROK (USFK) is becoming a growing concern in the region. If the United States decides to withdraw its forces from the Korean Peninsula, Japan is going to be the frontline state to face continental powers, including the DPRK.

The Korean situation is therefore one of the most crucial factors in drafting the 2018 NDPG. However, the issue was not thoroughly discussed because the bilateral talks are still in progress. The development of the U.S.-DPRK talks will have a huge impact upon the Northeast Asian situation and the NDPG must be reconsidered to face the new reality.

Conclusion

The strategic environment of Northeast Asia is constantly developing after the emergence of the North Korean nuclear and missile threat as well as the Chinese military buildup. After the failure of the Obama administration's engagement policy, the Trump administration has taken a much harder approach towards China.

The global system does not function as well as it used to due to the changed structure of the world. The system should be updated to face the new economic reality and to coexist with an emerging China. Since the United States is not willing to renew the global system for stability, it is necessary for Japan and other American allies to propose a design that would be desirable for the region. The new NDPG is the first step for Japan to show the sense of "responsibility sharing" for the stability of the region through cooperation with friendly countries in the area.

Strategic Alignment Prepares Japan-U.S. Alliance for Future Cooperation

Kaleb Redden and Nina Wagner

Introduction

Japan's new National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) represent a significant and welcome development in Japan's defense policy. The U.S.-Japan Alliance is the cornerstone of the United States presence in the region, and an advantage for both our nations to counter those who seek to undermine the principles of a free and open Indo-Pacific. Ensuring that the U.S.-Japan alliance and its respective defense establishments are well aligned is therefore a priority. This paper offers views on Japan's new NDPG by examining it through the lens of the United States' closest corresponding document, its National Defense Strategy (NDS). The organizations responsible for crafting these strategies within the U.S. Department of Defense and Japan's Ministry of Defense stayed in close communication during the development of these documents, so it should come as no surprise that there are strong elements of alignment.

Relevant themes from the National Defense Strategy

The NDS provides the pre-eminent strategic guidance for the U.S. Department of Defense, setting the Department's priorities and guiding its activities and investments. While brevity prohibits a full review of NDS themes here, a few key points of context are useful for the discussion on NDPG that follows.

- The NDS says that the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition with revisionist powers is the central challenge to U.S. prosperity and security.
- The NDS identifies the principal problem facing the Department as the eroding U.S. military advantage vis-à-vis China and Russia, which if unaddressed, may lead to increasingly aggressive behavior by those actors. In the Indo-Pacific, China seeks to leverage military modernization, influence operations, militarize the South China Sea, and use predatory economics to coerce neighboring countries and reorder the region to its advantage.
- While China and Russia are identified as the Pentagon's focus, the NDS also makes clear that the Department is not ignoring the dangers posed by North Korea, Iran, or terrorist organizations.

These NDS priorities require significant changes within the Department, because deterring and, if necessary, defeating major power aggression is a fundamentally different challenge than the regional conflicts and counter-terrorism operations that the United States prioritized for much of the last twenty years.

Having clearly identified the principal problem it is trying to solve, the NDS provides an argument for how it will solve this problem. Namely:

“A more lethal, resilient, and rapidly innovating Joint Force, combined with a robust constellation of allies and partners, will sustain American influence and

ensure favorable balances of power that safeguard the free and open international order. Collectively, our force posture, alliance and partnership architecture, and Department modernization will provide the capabilities and agility required to prevail in conflict and preserve peace through strength.”

As a result, the NDS seeks to advance U.S. objectives through three lines of effort:

- Building more lethal force;
- Strengthening our alliances and attracting new partners;
- Reforming the Department for greater performance and accountability.

Resonance between the NDS and NDPG

A review of Japan’s new National Defense Program Guidelines in light of the NDS reveals significant commonality and alignment between these two documents. The shared emphases in these strategies include their diagnoses of the security environment, elements of each of the three of the previously mentioned lines of effort, and some practical steps that flow from a shared strategic context. For example, both the NDPG and NDS:

- See a security environment that is changing at a very high rate of speed.
- Note concerns over the balance of power in the region, and challenges to the rules-based international order.
- Emphasize deterring threats and, if necessary, being prepared to respond.
- Recognize a changing character of war that demands increased attention to new domains like space and cyber, as well as the electromagnetic spectrum. Importantly, both documents also appreciate that these dynamics affect the conduct of operations in the more traditional air, sea, and land domains.
- Suggest that this changing character of warfare requires our respective armed forces to think through new operational concepts.

This congruent diagnosis of the security environment leads to implications for the capabilities we prioritize. The ultimate results from these two strategies will unfold in the budgets and procurement plans of future years. However, one can safely draw a number of conclusions from examining these two documents:

- Close readers of the NDS would welcome Tokyo’s prioritization of cross-domain operations and advanced capabilities in cyber, space, air and missile defense, and stand-off defense capability.
- The NDPG also focused on enhancing capabilities in conventional domains. In particular, Japan’s procurement of STOVL F-35s will allow for greater operational flexibility, and the conversion of the Izumo-class ships to support STOVL operations will be increasingly important for dispersal and survivability in the current security environment.
- There are less newsworthy but nonetheless critical directions in the NDPG that also align closely with the NDS, such as Japan’s intent to strengthen the sustainability and resiliency of its forces in this complex environment.

These two strategies also share a similar mindset on the value of allies and partners. Maintaining a strong alliance and partner network is the second of the NDS’s pillars, and this concept features prominently in the NDPG as well, including:

- Affirmation of the importance of the alliance with United States, including its combined deterrence and response capabilities.
- A strong signal that Japan plans to play a larger role in regional and international security activities. The NDPG prioritizes building regional networks through bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral arrangements; notes Japanese efforts to build a strong partnership with India, a natural partner for both Japan and the United States; and signals Tokyo's intent to work closely with ASEAN on a range of military and economic issues.

Finally, both our strategies see a changing landscape for innovation, including the increasing relevance of commercial innovations to defense, and the imperative to find ways to tap new technologies with potential defense applications. The United States has undertaken a number of key initiatives in this area: creating a Defense Innovation Board, establishing innovation units in key technology hubs to help the Department identify and incorporate emerging commercial technologies, and standing-up a Joint Artificial Intelligence Center. With the new NDPG's release, the Department of Defense will be interested in Japan's work with its industrial base and technology sector, especially to collaborate on some of these new technologies.

Implications for future U.S.-Japan cooperation

Shared security interests and common views on how to protect those interests form the basis for cooperation. Thus, the commonality evident between the NDPG and NDS provides a strong foundation for future collaboration. It is notable that the leading strategy organizations in both the U.S. Defense Department and Japanese Ministry of Defense engaged in periodic dialogue as their reviews were underway; this dialogue is itself a strong symbol of the trust and uniqueness of our relationship, since these documents set the direction of our respective defense establishments.

Our strategies not only share a similar diagnosis and sense of the appropriate response, but both documents highlight a number of challenges to implementation that may prove fruitful areas of collaboration. For example:

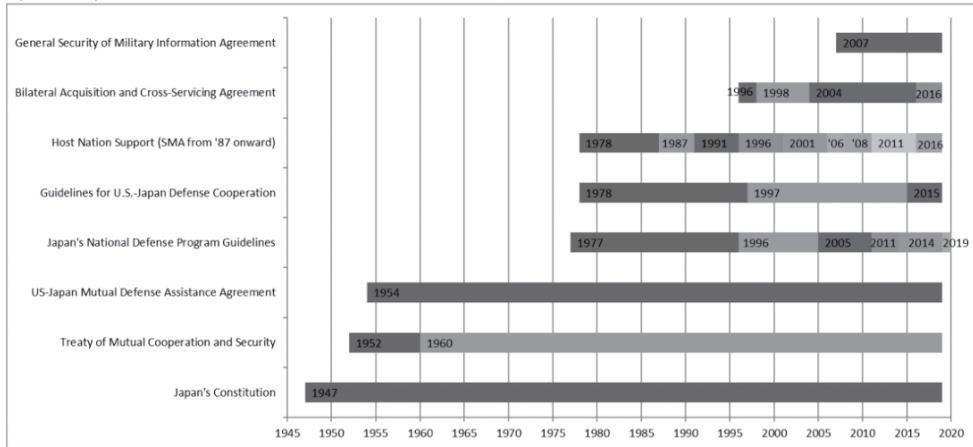
- Both our strategies note the importance of capacity-building activities with partners. Both our nations want to maximize the return on investment we see from these activities, so it makes sense that we work together when practical.
- Both documents note the importance of leveraging new technological innovations. Integrating outside technologies can be difficult, so we can learn from each other's experiences.
- Perhaps most importantly, the fact that both nations have just outlined an agenda to significantly reorient their militaries presents opportunities to study our combined future capabilities, develop a common understanding of how we are prepared to operate our forces together, and regularly assess the deterrent effect of our combined policies, capabilities, and activities.

From the Department of Defense's perspective, Japan's newly released NDPG therefore represent a substantial development in Japan's defense policy, provide a path forward to ensure Japan's competitiveness and leadership in the region, and provide a platform for continued cooperation in the future.

Appendix

Start year	Description
1947	Constitution
1952	Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security
1960	Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security
1954	Mutual Defense Assistance
1977	National Defense Program Guidelines
1996	National Defense Program Guidelines
2005	National Defense Program Guidelines
2011	National Defense Program Guidelines
2014	National Defense Program Guidelines
1978	Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation
1997	Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation
2015	Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation
1978	Host Nation Support (SMA from '87 onward)
1987	Special Measures Agreement (Host nation support)
1991	Special Measures Agreement (Host nation support)
1996	Special Measures Agreement (Host nation support)
2001	Special Measures Agreement (Host nation support)
2006	Special Measures Agreement (Host nation support)
2008	Special Measures Agreement (Host nation support)
2011	Special Measures Agreement (Host nation support)
2016	Special Measures Agreement (Host nation support)
1996	Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement
1998	Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement
2004	Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement
2016	Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement
2007	General Security of Military Information Agreement

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Lt. Gen. Koichi Isobe retired from active duty in August 2015, after thirty-five years of service in the Japan Self-Defense Force. He is a Strategic Advisor to Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd and a Senior Fellow at the Harvard Asia Center. He was Commander of Eastern Army in his final two years of service. During his career, General Isobe served in senior positions at the Joint Staff: Director J-5 and Vice Chief of Staff. He served as a linchpin of Japan-U.S. military coordination through Operation Tomodachi during the Great East Japan Earthquake whilst serving as J-5. He attended the National Defense Academy. After his graduation from Command & General Staff College, he served at Japan-U.S. Security Affairs Division at Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He also served various staff appointments in General Staff Office. His command positions included 9th Aviation Squadron, 7th Armored Division and Eastern Army. He earned a master's degree in Military Studies at USMC University and a master's degree in National Resource Strategy at NDU. His awards include the Legion of Merit and the Meritorious Service Medal.

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Masanori Nishi is currently the Executive Advisor at Nippon Life Insurance Company. He has been a Special Advisor to the Minister of Defense (2017-2018) after holding the role previously in 2015-2016. Nishi has held numerous roles at the Ministry of Defense such as Director General of the Bureau of Finance and Equipment, Director General of the Bureau of Defense Policy, and Administrative Vice Minister of Defense. Nishi first joined Japan Defense Agency (JDA) in April of 1978 and through the years held various roles in the Secretarial Division, Bureau of Personnel, Bureau of Equipment, NAHA Defense Facility Bureau, and the Technical Research and Development Institute. Nishi holds a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Tokyo and a M.Litt of International Relations from the University of Oxford.

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James L. Schoff is a senior fellow in the Asia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. His research focuses on U.S.-Japan relations and regional engagement, East Asian security, Japan's political economy, and alliance collaboration in high-tech fields. Before joining Carnegie in 2012, Schoff served as senior adviser for East Asia policy at the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense and before then as director of Asia Pacific Studies at the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis (IFPA). His publications include *Uncommon Alliance for the Common Good: The United States and Japan after the Cold War* (Carnegie, 2017), *Navigating a New U.S.-Japan Defense Technology Frontier* (Carnegie, 2015), and *How to Upgrade U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation* (Carnegie, 2014). Schoff earned degrees from Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and Duke University (including a year at International Christian University in Japan).

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