

Japan-United States Alliance and Japan's Defense Concept

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Introduction

This research is designed to historically explore the relationship between the Japan-United States Alliance and Japan's defense concept in the 1970s based on official documents as well as the oral history and interviews of people familiar with the matter. Studies on the alliance are broadly divided into alliance formation (covering determinant factors for the alliance and issues related to the dissolution of the alliance due to peace, crisis or war), alliance management (verifying the extent of burden-sharing, free riding and functioning of security through the alliance as public goods by focusing on the dynamics of the alliance), and alliance effectiveness (looking at the extent to which the alliance influence the frequency of war or the maintenance of peace).¹ This research belongs to the category of alliance management in the sense that it looks into the coherence between a country's defense concept and the alliance system that country joins in.

“The National Defense Program Outline (*bōei keikaku no taikō*)”² developed on October 29, 1976 (1976 NDPO) introduced the “Basic Defense Force Concept (*kibanteki bōei ryoku kōsō*).” Identifying what is supposed to be Japan's defense posture, the 1976 NDPO states that “[T]he possession of the assorted functions required for national defense, while retaining balanced organization and deployment, including logistical support,” “Japan will repel limited and small-scale aggression, in principle, without external assistance,” “At this time, the present scale of defense capability seems to closely approach target goals of the above-mentioned concept,” and Japan's defense concept “will be standardized so that, when serious changes

¹ Victor D. Cha (translation supervised by Yoichi Funabashi, translated by Hideya Kurata), *Bei-Nichi-Kan Hanmoku wo Koeta Renkei* [Alignment Despite Antagonism: The United States-Korea-Japan Security Triangle], Yuhikaku, 2003, p. 35. See also Victor D. Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism: The United States-Korea-Japan Security Triangle* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 36; Glenn Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 43, p. 165.

² The NDPO set forth the basic policies for Japan's security, as well as a basic guideline for Japan's defense force in the future, including the significance and role of Japan's defense force, the specific structure of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), and the target levels of major defense equipment to be built up. The NDPO changed its title as the “National Defense Program Guidelines” since 2004. After being formulated as the 1976 NDPO for the first time under the Cabinet of Prime Minister Takeo Miki, four such documents followed suit: 1995 NDPO (developed on November 28, 1995) under the Tomiichi Murayama Cabinet; 2004 NDPG (developed on December 10, 2004) under the Junichiro Koizumi Cabinet; 2010 NDPG (developed on December 17, 2010) under the Naoto Kan Cabinet; and 2013 NDPG (developed on December 17, 2013) under the second Shinzo Abe Cabinet.

in situation demand, the defense structure can be smoothly adapted to meet such changes.”³ These constitute what is known as the Basic Defense Force Concept.⁴

Among these components of the Basic Defense Force Concept, the portion that says “Japan will repel limited and small-scale aggression, in principle, without external assistance” is what is called the concept of “repelling limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance (*gentei shōkibo shinryaku dokuryoku taisho*).” Regarding this concept, theoretical disputes are continuing in relation to the Japan-U.S. security arrangements. One way to interpret this relationship has been to focus on the idea of “without external assistance,” a component of the notion, and conclude that, although the notion acknowledges the role of the Japan-U.S. Alliance itself, its main thrust really is “self-reliant defense.”⁵ Others have interpreted the notion the other way around by focusing on the “limited and small-scale aggression” part, which assumes that Japan relies on the U.S. to cope with an aggression that goes beyond “limited and small-scale,” and thus concluding that the notion emphasizes the importance of the Japan-U.S. Alliance.⁶ In these debates, attempts have been made to identify the significance of the concept of repelling limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance from the “self-reliant defense vs. Japan-U.S. Alliance” paradigm, the traditional framework for an analysis of security policies of postwar Japan. In this research, however, I examine first the coherence between the concept of repelling limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance and the Japan-U.S. Alliance in terms of the “buildup and operation

³ “The National Defense Program Outline for FY1977 and Beyond” (1976 NDPO) (decided and approved by the National Defense Council and the Cabinet on October 29, 1976). *Defense of Japan* defines the Basic Defense Force Concept as follows:

“A) On the premise that those domestic and international situations.....will not undergo any major changes for some time to come;

B) Japan’s defense structure should primarily possess the assorted functions required for national defense, while retaining balanced organization and deployment, including logistic support.

C) Such defense preparedness should enable Japan to maintain a full surveillance posture during peacetime, and cope effectively with conflict to the extent of limited and small-scale aggression [without external assistance].

D) This defense posture should be capable of adapting smoothly to meet any serious changes in the situation around Japan which might require such adaptation.”

Defense of Japan 1977 (English version), p. 52.

⁴ However, the expression of the “Basic Defense Force” was used not in the main text of the 1976 NDPO but in a statement of Defense Agency Director-General Michita Sakata, which was released on the same day as the formulation of the 1976 NDPO. “Concerning the Decision on the ‘National Defense Program Outline’ (Excerpt of the Statement of the Director-General of the Defense Agency) (October 29, 1976).

⁵ Akihiro Sado, *Sengo Nihon no Boei to Seiji* [Defense and Politics in Postwar-Japan], Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2005, pp. 274-278. Also see Hideki Uemura, *Jieitai wa Dare no Monoka* [To Whom Do the Self-Defense Forces Belong?], Kodansha, 2002, p. 134; and Yu Takeda, “Nihon no Boei Seisaku ni okeru ‘Jishu’ no Ronri – ‘Boei Keikaku no Taiko’ Sakutei wo Chushin ni” [The Logic of ‘Autonomy’ in Japan’s Defense Policy: the Case of the National Defense Program Outline Formulated in 1976], *Kokusai Seiji Keizai Gaku Kenkyuu* [International Political Economy], No. 17 (March 2006).

⁶ Norman D. Levin, *Japan’s Changing Defense Posture* (RAND: California, 1988), pp. 13-14. Also see Shingo Yoshida, *Nichi-Bei Domei no Seidoka – Hatten to Shinka no Rekishi Katei* [The Institutionalization of the Japan-U.S. Alliance: A History of Its Development and Evolution], Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2012, pp. 272-275.

of defense capabilities.”⁷

I examine next the notion that “[T]he possession of the assorted functions required for national defense, while retaining balanced organization and deployment, including logistical support,” that is, in short, the concept of “maintaining various functions/functional and geographical balance (*kakushu kinō hoji / kinōteki chiriteki kinkō*).” The reason why I examine this notion is because the U.S., as Japan’s ally, was increasingly emphasizing the concept of “complementarity” in the context of the Japan-U.S. security relationship when the 1976 NDPO was being developed and it seemed that this position of the U.S. and the concept of maintaining various functions/functional and geographical balance under Japan’s Basic Defense Force Concept were forced to occupy conflicting theoretical positions. In this research, I discuss in detail the background that led the U.S. to accept Japan’s Basic Defense Force Concept, including the idea of maintaining various functions/functional and geographical balance, while embracing the concept of complementarity.

The Japan-U.S. Alliance and the Concept of “Repelling Limited and Small-Scale Aggression without External Assistance”

The 1976 NDPO, noting that “[T]he most appropriate defense goal would seem to be the maintenance of a full surveillance posture in peacetime and the ability to cope effectively with situations up to the point of limited and small-scale aggression,” states, “Should direct aggression occur, Japan will repel such aggression at the earliest possible stage by taking immediate responsive action and trying to conduct an integrated, systematic operation of its defense capability. Japan will repel limited and small-scale aggression, in principle, without external assistance. In cases where the unassisted repelling of aggression is not feasible, due to scale, type or other factors of such aggression, Japan will continue an unyielding resistance by mobilizing all available forces until such times as cooperation from the United States is introduced, thus rebuffing such aggression.” The definition of the Basic Defense Force Concept in *Defense of Japan 1977* says that it should allow Japan “to maintain full surveillance posture during peacetime and cope effectively with conflict to the extent of limited and small-scale aggression [‘without external assistance’].” *Defense of Japan 1977* explains the “limited and small aggression” as “a small-scale aggression among the ‘limited aggressions.’ Generally, such aggression is conducted as a surprise attack without extensive preparations for aggression to avoid the ‘intent’ of aggression being detected in advance and is designed to create a *fait accompli* in a short period of time.”⁸ According to comments of people involved with the Defense Agency, of the general stages of threat comprising (1) indirect aggression; (2) covert use of force; (3) small-scale limited aggression; (4) full-scale limited

⁷ See Yasuaki Chijiwa, “Sengo Nihon no Anzen Hoshō Seisaku ni kansuru Bunseki Wakugumi to shite no ‘Boeiryoku Seibi/Unyo’—‘Gentei Shokibo Sinryaku Dokuryoku Taisho’ Gainen wo Tegakarini” [‘Buildup and Operation of Defense Capabilities’ as the Framework of Analysis of Security Policies in Postwar Japan – With the ‘Concept of Repelling Limited and Small-Scale Aggression without External Assistance’ as the Clue], *Nenpo Seijigaku* [Annual Report Political Science], 2014-1 (June 2014).

⁸ *Defense of Japan 1977*, p. 55.

aggression; (5) unlimited war using conventional weapons; and (6) all-out war, including the use of nuclear weapons, Japan's defense capability envisioned in *Defense of Japan 1977* shrink threats it should respond to by one notch to include small-scale limited aggression or stage (3) as opposed to threats envisioned for Japan's defense capability up to the "Fourth Defense Buildup Plan (*yojibō*)" that included threats up to stage (4) or "aggression situation up to a localized war using conventional weapons"⁹ ("Limited aggression situation" is synonymous with "aggression situation up to a localized war"¹⁰). Furthermore, the idea that Japan should cope with an aggression situation up to such a scale on its own is the concept of repelling limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance.

Then, how should we understand the relationship between the idea of repelling limited and small-scale aggression "without external assistance" and the Japan-U.S. Alliance? The 1976 NDPO expressly states that "Japan will repel limited and small-scale aggression, in principle, without external assistance." Some researchers interpret this passage as representing "self-reliant defense." If that is the case, as Japan is supposed to respond to the limited and small-scale aggression "without external assistance," does it mean that, as long as the scale of the aggression situation remains limited and small-scale, the Japan-U.S. security treaty would never be set in motion? If the wording of the 1976 NDPO is literally interpreted, a concern expressed by Naotoshi Sakonjo, who served as Secretary-General of the Joint Staff Council when the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation (the 1978 Guidelines)¹¹ was developed (the 1978 Guidelines were formulated on November 27, 1978) would prove to be correct. Specifically, he said that "there really is a concern, in theory, that as Japan regards [the aggression by] up to four divisions the limited and small-scale aggression, the U.S. would not come to the aid of Japan." But this concern, in fact, is not likely to materialize as expressed in Sakonjo's comment that immediately followed the above statement: "Such a concern is realistically an unfounded fear. I expect the U.S. to come to help Japan as long as Japan becomes subject to aggression even by a single division."¹² That is because the 1976 NDPO states that Japan is supposed to repel the limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance "in principle." As *Defense of Japan 1977* explains, this "in principle" was included as a condition because "it is considered that if an armed attack against Japan occurs, even if the attack is a limited and small-scale aggression, the Japan-U.S. security treaty will naturally

⁹ Noboru Kousa, "Meikakuka sareta 'Kibanteki Boeiriyoku Koso' – 'Boei Keikaku no Taiko' no Tokucho to Kadai [Clarified 'Basic Defense Force Concept' – The Characteristics and Problems of the 'National Defense Program Outline']", *Kokubo* [National Defense], Vol. 26, No. 1 (January 1977), pp. 40-41.

¹⁰ Defense Division, Bureau of Defense, "House of Representatives, Committee on Cabinet, to the Director-General of the Defense Agency, December 9, 1975, Kosuke Uehara (Japan Socialist Party), Question 5-2-(1)," Office of Defense Agency History, Defense Agency, *Kokkai Toben Shiryo 76, 77 kai (Showa 50 nen) 1/1* [Reference on Responses to Questions Made in the Diet, 76th and 77th Sessions (1975) 1/1], (a collection held in Main Building-4A-034-00: 2006 Defense 00479100 of the National Archives of Japan), p. 31.

¹¹ The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation are the operational documents that set forth the specific roles and responsibilities of the SDF and the U.S. forces in the event of an attack against Japan or an emergency in neighboring countries.

¹² "Interview with Mr. Naotoshi Sakonjo, 1996, U.S.-Japan Project, Oral History Program, National Security Archives (Washington, D.C.) <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/japan/sakonjo.pdf>> p. 9 (accessed on October 15, 2015).

be applied to the situation.”¹³

What it means is that the concept of repelling limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance is the concept of “defense buildup” but not the concept of “operation of the defense capability.” Akira Shiota, who was Defense Councilor of the Defense Agency when the 1978 Guidelines were developed, states as follows:

The 1976 NDPO states that “the SDF will repel limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance.” Though it says so, the SDF would not actually fight. It is not an actual operational plan. Being the defense buildup plan, it only states that Japan wants to develop a capability to allow its forces to fight. However, it was written in the 1976 NDPO that “the SDF will repel the limited and small-scale enemy without external assistance, and when it can no longer do that alone, then the SDF will repel the enemy with the assistance of the U.S.” So, everyone who read it automatically said “Hey! The SDF are going to fight alone until the U.S. comes to the aid of Japan.” Because of that phrase in the 1976 NDPO, I faced so many problems and had to explain so many times that “This is not true. The NDPO is not an operational plan.”¹⁴

In the first place, as Keiji Omori, then an official in the Defense Division of the Bureau of Defense of the Defense Agency, wrote, “the defense capability Japan should possess was conventionally thought to be the future target to be attained. Therefore, the defense concept [of the 1976 NDPO] can be described as an idealized vision of Japan's defense capability upon its completion and was not the realistic idea of how to respond to the present situation”¹⁵ and is thus different from an operational plan that considers what to do in the event of the occurrence of a situation and absolutely no more than the future goal. Also, from the perspective of the defense capability buildup, particularly when the role-sharing with an ally is undefined, it is easier to explain by excluding alliance factors as much as possible. Touching on the line of thinking behind the development of the defense buildup plan, Shigehiro Mori, then-Director of the Defense Division of the Defense Department of the Air Staff Office, says that “if war were to break out, under the arrangements for Japan-U.S. defense cooperation, everyone viscerally thinks the U.S. is the natural partner to take joint action with Japan. However, things are different when we develop a defense buildup plan. We develop it on the assumption that ‘the U.S. will be late in coming to the aid of Japan.’ We do it with the idea that the SDF will have to cope with the situation by themselves in the beginning.”¹⁶ To put it the other way

¹³ *Defense of Japan 1977*, p. 60.

¹⁴ Japanese Modern Historical Manuscripts Association eds., *Shiota Akira Oraru Hisutori* [Oral History of Akira Shiota], Japanese Modern Historical Manuscripts Association, 2006, p. 118.

¹⁵ Keiji Omori, *Waga Kuni no Kokubo Senryaku* [Japan's National Defense Strategy], Naigai Shuppan, 2009, p. 29.

¹⁶ National Institute for Defense Studies ed., *Mori Shigehiro Oraru Hisutori* [Oral History of Shigehiro Mori], in National Institute for Defense Studies ed., *Oraru Hisutori Reisenki no Boeiryoku Seibi to Domei Seisaku (2) – Boei Keikaku no Taiko to Nichi-Bei Boei Kyoryoku no tameno Shishin (Jo)* [Oral History The Defense Buildup and Alliance Policy during the Cold War Era (2) – The National Defense Program Outline and the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Security Cooperation (Part I)], National Institute for Defense Studies, 2013, p. 131.

around, without this idea, the defense buildup plan could not have been developed. Noboru Hoshuyama, who was deeply involved in the process of developing the 1976 NDPO as a senior official in the Defense Division of the Bureau of Defense, notes: “[Without a goal such as repelling limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance,] the NDPO would say something along the lines of, ‘Japan’s defense capability does not really matter. You can buy anything you want within the limits of a defense budget. You might as well just do training using it.’ This cannot be the thinking behind the defense buildup of an independent state.”; “Then, we need to put in an explanation that ‘this part (Japan’s defense capability) does have a role to play, albeit small.’ That is why we came up with the idea of limited and small-scale aggression. So, the only explanation that we can offer is ‘having this much in a self-contained manner would serve as a trigger or a fuse that can unleash the power (of the U.S. forces).’”; and “We included that (the limited and small scale aggression, etc.) in order to avoid that [the notion that could lead to the idea that Japan’s defense capability does not really matter]. We took pains to put that in.”¹⁷ All these mean that as we stand not in the future but at the present point of time on the temporal axis, the operation of the defense capability that cannot be explained unless alliance factors are incorporated is basically a matter of another dimension compared to the concept of repelling limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance. Therefore, as Hoshuyama points out, “[The 1976 NDPO] was not necessarily palatable to the operators of the defense capability or SDF personnel who stand in the breach.”¹⁸ Makoto Sakuma, who successively held various posts at the Maritime Staff Office, including Chief of the Plans and Programs Section, Director of the Plans and Programs Division, Director-General of the Operations and Plans Department and the Chief of Staff of the Maritime SDF from the late 1970s through the early 1990s, states that “the explanations offered in *Defense of Japan* are just the fictions of the defense buildup and are different from actual operations” and “I would say that repelling the limited and small-scale aggression during the Cold War is just a fictional vision”¹⁹ (However, even if the defense buildup goals are achieved, it does not mean that the concept of the defense buildup will immediately be shaped into an operational plan. In that case, based on the defense capability levels achieved, the idea of the operation would be presented separately. In other words, the defense capability buildup and operation of the defense capability would never be treated as part of the same dimension).

Regarding the compatibility between the concept of repelling limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance and the Japan-U.S. Alliance from the perspective of the distinction between the defense buildup and the operation, government responses to interpellations in the Diet in later years made this point clear. At the House of Councillors Committee on Budget session on March 29, 1985, Shinji Yazaki, Director-General of the Bureau of Defense of the Defense Agency, made the following statement:

¹⁷ National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies ed., *Hoshuyama Noboru Oraru Hisutori* [Noboru Hoshuyama Oral History], (Part II), National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, 2005, pp. 67-68.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 180.

¹⁹ National Institute for Defense Studies ed., *Sakuma Makoto Oraru Hisutori* [Oral History of Makoto Sakuma], (Part II), National Institute for Defense Studies, 2007, p. 166.

“This is how the execution of the operation for the defense of Japan works under the mechanism of [the Guidelines].

On the other hand . . . the NDPO, as a means of achieving the goal of developing the defense capability needed by Japan's SDF, has set forth the capability of the SDF that at least allows Japan to cope with the limited and small-scale aggression on its own, in principle. Thus, we have a structure under which both can function with consistency.”²⁰

From the very start, the concept of repelling limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance, as found in the reference on responses to questions made in the Diet prepared by the Defense Division, the Bureau of Defense, the Defense Agency of June 10, 1976, was summarized as follows: “This [concept] does not mean to emphasize situations such as aggression but is in line with the way of thinking that an independent state should definitely be able to cope with a situation of that magnitude without external assistance. We do not assume a specific situation of aggression either.”²¹ However, possibly because the concept may be partly accepted as an operational concept for the Ground and Air SDF, it was sometimes explained as if there was a probability that a limited and small-scale aggression would ensue.²² The explanation that repelling limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance is the concept of defense buildup and has nothing to do with the occurrence probability of such a situation came to be established in the 1980s.²³

The Concept of “Maintaining Various Functions/Functional and Geographical Balance” and the Reaction of the U.S. as Japan's Ally

The 1976 NDPO also states that “[T]he possession of the assorted functions required for national defense, while retaining balanced organization and deployment, including logistical support.” The definition of the Basic Defense Force Concept in *Defense of Japan 1977* uses the same wording. Actually, the concept of maintaining various functions/functional and

²⁰ Responses by Government Delegate Shinji Yazaki, House of Councillors Committee on Budget on March 29, 1985, the 102nd Session of the Diet, No. 16, *Kokkai Kaigiroku* [Conference Minutes of the Diet] <http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/cgi-bin/KENSAKU/swk_dispdoc.cgi?SESSION=39030&SAVED_RID=2&PAGE=0&POS=0&TOTAL=0&SRV_ID=6&DOC_ID=1291&DPAGE=1&DTOTAL=71&DPOS=1&SORT_DIR=0&SORT_TYPE=0&MODE=1&DMY=44262> (accessed on March 21, 2015).

²¹ Defense Division, Bureau of Defense, “House of Representatives, Committee on Cabinet, June 10, 1976, Masahiro Nakaji (Japan Communist Party), Question 2-1,” Office of Defense Agency History, Defense Agency, *Kokkai Toben Shiryo dai 77 kai (Showa 51 nen) 5/9* [Reference on Responses to Questions Made in the Diet, 77th Session (1975) 5/9], (Main Building-4A-034-00 2005 Defense 00484100), p. 2210.

²² Responses by Government Delegate Keiichi Ito, House of Councillors Committee on Cabinet, the 84th Session of the Diet, No. 8, *Kokkai Kaigiroku* [Conference Minutes of the Diet] <http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/cgi-bin/KENSAKU/swk_dispdoc.cgi?SESSION=39030&SAVED_RID=1&PAGE=0&POS=0&TOTAL=0&SRV_ID=5&DOC_ID=787&DPAGE=1&DTOTAL=21&DPOS=16&SORT_DIR=0&SORT_TYPE=0&MODE=1&DMY=39105> (accessed on March 21, 2015).

²³ Responses by Government Delegate Seiki Nishihiro, House of Councillors Investigative Committee on Foreign Affairs and Comprehensive National Security on November 20, 1985, the 103rd Session of the Diet, No. 3, *Kokkai Kaigiroku* [Conference Minutes of the Diet] <http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/cgi-bin/KENSAKU/swk_dispdoc.cgi?SESSION=39030&SAVED_RID=2&PAGE=0&POS=0&TOTAL=0&SRV_ID=6&DOC_ID=1847&DPAGE=2&DTOTAL=71&DPOS=21&SORT_DIR=0&SORT_TYPE=0&MODE=1&DMY=44262> (accessed on March 21, 2015).

geographical balance had the potential to become a sensitive issue in the context of the U.S. policy towards Japan pursued at that time.

Under the administration of President Richard M. Nixon, in the wake of the failure in the Vietnam War, the U.S. began to shift its external commitment. Until then, the U.S. had upheld the vision of preventing communists from invading any part of the world from the outset since the Korean War but began changing this stance gradually to that of non-intervention in parts of the Asian region that were not vitally important for the national interests of the U.S. Such a policy reversal was clarified in the “Nixon Doctrine” announced on July 25, 1969.²⁴ Under the Nixon Doctrine, the U.S. came to expect Japan to assume a greater role in its defense. More specifically, as shown in the “National Security Study Memorandum 5 (NSSM 5)” prepared by the National Security Council (NSC) on April 28, 1969, the U.S. expected “[T]o see Japanese put even more stress on qualitative improvements and expanded air and naval surveillance, ASW [Anti-Submarine Warfare], air defense, and tactical air capability.”²⁵ Against this background emerged the concept of “complementarity” as found in a document prepared and published by the U.S. Department of State titled “Japan’s Defense Alternatives” on July 18, 1973.²⁶ The concept of complementarity is the idea that Japan should enhance its capabilities in specialized areas such as ASW, air defense and supply, in exchange for the U.S. providing nuclear deterrence and taking charge of long-range attack missions and protection of sea lanes beyond 1,000 miles, rather than striving to retain well-balanced defense capability. However, the concept of complementarity, while encouraging Japan to make greater efforts for its defense, was also designed to keep Japan from embarking on the arbitrary strengthening of its defense capability by establishing a complementing relationship between the U.S. and Japan in terms of their defense capabilities. Japan’s arbitrary strengthening of its defense capability was considered unfavorable because it would draw fire from other Asian countries.²⁷ The U.S. itself also wanted to maintain some control over Japan’s defense capability.²⁸ Under the concept of mutual complementarity, the Nixon administration worked to keep Japan from embarking on the arbitrary strengthening of its defense capability while at the same time

²⁴ The Nixon Doctrine is the U.S. foreign policy statement President Nixon issued in Guam, which said that the U.S. will expect its Asian allies to have the primary responsibility for their national defense except against the threat of nuclear weapons.

²⁵ NSSM 5: Japan Policy, April 28, 1969, 01061, Japan and the United States: Diplomatic, Security, and Economic Relations, Part I: 1960-1976, NSA.

²⁶ Japanese Defense Alternatives, July 18, 1973, 01777, Japan and the U.S. I. Yoshida, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-252 and pp. 272-287; Takao Segawa, “Nichi-Bei Boei Kyoryoku no Rekishiteki Haikai – Nikuson Seiken Ki no Tainichi Seisaku wo Chushin ni [The Historical Background of Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation—Focusing on Policy toward Japan during the Nixon Administration],” *Nenpo Kokyo Seisaku Gaku* [Annals, Public Policy Studies], No. 1 (March 2007).

²⁷ Memorandum from the Director of Defense Program Analysis and Evaluation (Sullivan) to Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, Washington, January 22, 1974, 185, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976* Vol. E-12 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 2011) <<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve12/d185>> (accessed on March 18, 2015).

²⁸ Study Prepared by the NSC Interdepartmental Group for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Washington, undated, 190, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, Vol. E-12. <<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve12/d190>> (accessed on March 18, 2015).

encouraging Japan to make greater efforts toward its defense. This policy was taken over by the administration of President Gerald R. Ford, Jr. (inaugurated on August 9, 1974).²⁹

Based on such intentions, just as Japan was working out the 1976 NDPO, the U.S. took notice of then Defense Agency Administrative Vice-Minister Takuya Kubo, an initial advocate of the Basic Defense Force Concept, and took interest in this initiative, particularly in anticipation of Japan's greater efforts toward its defense. The U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, in its official telegram to the Department of State dated September 18, 1975, soon after Kubo's assumption of the post of administrative vice-minister, reported: "As Department aware Kubo has emerged over the last few years as the best defense thinker at the policy level at JDA and he has been closely identified Sakata's effort to stimulate understanding of Japan's broad security interest."³⁰ And as early as on October 31, 1975, just two days after the issuance of "the Director-General's Second Instructions Concerning the Preparation of the Defense Buildup Plan Draft in FY1977 and Beyond," the Defense Intelligence Agency came up with a report indicating that "Sakata has suggested new concepts in formulating Japan's future defense program."³¹ In addition, immediately after the publication of *Defense of Japan 1976*, regarding whose preparation Kubo was quite enthusiastic, there were views within the Department of Defense that "It tacitly accepts our notion of US-Japanese defense complementarity."³²

As the details about Japan's defense capability contained in the 1976 NDPO came out, however, U.S. officials gradually came to voice their discontent. According to the remarks of MSDF Chief of Staff Teiji Nakamura about the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (SCC or "two-plus-two") held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on July 8, 1976, just before the development of the 1976 NDPO, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command Noel Gayler told the Japanese officials at the meeting that the U.S. approved of the Basic Defense Force Concept but what the U.S. approved of was the concept's stance of getting Japan ready for broad and various situations, not its quantity.³³ In addition, when Bureau of Defense Director-General Keiichi Ito explained the NDPO to the Americans at the working-level Security Consultative Group (SCG) meeting held on November 8, 1976, immediately after the adoption of the 1976 NDPO, Commander of the U.S. Forces in Japan Walter T. Galligan voiced concern, "[Defense] spending limitation would make [policy] implementation

²⁹ NSSM 210, September 26, 1974, 01878, Japan and the U.S. I, NSA.

³⁰ Telegram from the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo to the Secretary of State, September 18, 1975, S/AJ-Amb. Johnson's Trip to Tokyo, Japan, Sept. 20-23, 1975, Records of U. Alexis Johnson, 1932-1977, Box 61, Record Group 59, Central Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives II (College Park, Maryland).

³¹ Japan: New Concept to Dominate Defense Planning, October 31, 1975, 00181, Japan and the United States: Diplomatic, Security, and Economic Relations, Part III: 1961-2000, NSA.

³² Information Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, June 22, 1976, Ford - Secretary of Defense (13), The Rumsfeld Papers <<http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/575/From%20Eugene%20V.%20McAuliffe%20re%20Japanese%20Defense%20White%20Paper%2006-22-1976.pdf#search=japan>> (accessed on May 22, 2015).

³³ National Institute for Defense Studies ed., *Teiji Nakamura Oraru Hisutori* [Oral History of Teiji Nakamura], (Part II), National Institute for Defense Studies, 2006, p. 198.

very difficult.”³⁴ The size of Japan’s defense capability presented in the 1976 NDPO seemed to have somewhat fallen short of the expectations of the U.S. military officials who wanted to see Japan make greater efforts toward its defense. The U.S. official who made the bold statements not only about the size of Japan’s defense capability but also about the Basic Defense Force Concept itself was Morton I. Abramowitz, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asian and Pacific affairs. Abramowitz visited Takuya Kubo, then Secretary-General of the Office of the National Defense Council on January 25, 1978 then under the administration of President James E. Carter, Jr. According to the records of their meeting, when Kubo referred to the idea of Japan holding the minimum necessary defense capability with enhanced self-reliance, Abramowitz stated, “Such a theme would be viewed with suspicion in the U.S. and could serious political problems here,” “Our other Asian allies and potential adversaries, would view increased Japanese military self-reliance as a dangerous and destabilizing trend.”³⁵ Abramowitz’s statements touched upon the issue of the compatibility between the concept of complementarity, which implied the U.S. wished to keep Japan from embarking on the arbitrary strengthening of its defense capability out of consideration for a potential backlash against Japan’s enhanced defense capability from Asian countries and for the U.S. desire to retain a measure of control over Japan’s defense capability, and the Basic Defense Force Concept, which proposed that Japan maintain the minimum necessary defense capability, a component of which was the concept of maintaining various functions/functional and geographical balance.

However, the Ford administration was cautious about putting outright pressure on Japan concerning the size of its defense capability. According to Hirokazu Samejima, Nakamura’s predecessor as MSDF Chief of Staff, in the process of developing the 1976 NDPO, no official talks were held between Japan and the U.S. about Japan’s defense concept or Japan’s expectations for the U.S. Rather, Japan only explained its decisions to Commander of the U.S. Forces in Japan Galligan. Samejima states as follows:

“In those years, as we did not have a forum for discussion with the U.S., Joint Staff Council Chairman Motoharu Shirakawa explained to Commander of the U.S. Forces in Japan Galligan about the idea of the defense capability Japan was going to build up using a conceptual diagram of the defense program. Commander Galligan said that as he was not authorized to discuss Japan’s defense buildup, he would report to the U.S. government that he received such explanations by Japan’s Defense Agency. That was all we had.”³⁶

³⁴ Telegram from the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo to the Department of State, November 15, 1976, No. 00141, Japan and the U.S. I, NSA.

³⁵ Telegram from the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo to the Department of State, February 2, 1978, No. 00357, Japan and the United States: Diplomatic, Security, and Economic Relations, Part II: 1972-1992, NSA.

³⁶ “Mr. Hirokazu Samejima,” 1997, U.S.-Japan Project, Oral History Program, NSA <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/japan/samejima.pdf>> pp. 4-5 (accessed on October 20, 2015).

The U.S. did not actively thrust its nose into the development process of the 1976 NDPO because such U.S. pressure was feared to invite backlash in Japan. The briefing memorandum, which appears to have been prepared by the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs of the Department of State for Deputy Secretary of State Charles W. Robinson around April 1976 states that "It [Japan] is moving generally in the right direction, however, and to pressure Japan to do much more would cause serious domestic political problems in Japan and result in loss of momentum towards a more effective defense posture" and cautioned that "Our view is that Japan is already moving, albeit gingerly, toward a somewhat more realistic defense policy. The US-Japan Security Treaty is getting greater acceptance as is the need for at least some Japanese military capacity. One of the surest ways to jeopardize this development and to create serious domestic political problems for the Government of Japan would be for the US to press Japan too hard on this issue."³⁷ Also, it was thought that even if the U.S. had applied strong pressure, Japan could not be expected to substantially improve its defense capability anyway. Regarding this, the aforementioned briefing memorandum prepared by the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs of the Department of State says that "Japan cannot be expected to do more than it is now doing in the field of defense for some time to come."³⁸ The memorandum prepared by the Department of Defense for President Ford in November 1976 also analyzed: "The Japanese have the inherent ability to strengthen greatly key elements of their self-defense forces. However, even were they to undertake an increased defense effort, it is unlikely that they could develop a self-sufficient defense capability in the next decade."³⁹ It was during the new Cold War period that the U.S. began to intervene in Japan's defense capability buildup in earnest.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, it cannot be confirmed by historical documents that have been disclosed so far to what extent the difference in nature between the concept of complementarity and the Basic Defense Force Concept had been shared within the U.S. government in terms of the awareness of the issue, other than then Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Abramowitz. Most U.S. government officials were perhaps more interested in the actual size of Japan's defense capability and the state of Japan-U.S. defense cooperation than in the theoretical issue of the compatibility between the concept of complementarity and the Basic Defense Force Concept. Furthermore, even if the U.S. had analyzed in detail the Basic Defense Force Concept itself and the analysis had consequently revealed that the concept of maintaining various functions/functional and geographical balance does not sit well with the concept of complementarity that expected Japan to enhance its capabilities in specialized areas, that does not mean that Japan would fail to strive for the improvement of its ASW and AEW capabilities as expected by the U.S. Also, even if Japan had moved to build

³⁷ Briefing Memorandum from the Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs (Vest) to the Acting Secretary of State (Robinson), 84, *FRUS, 1969-1976* Vol. XXXV <<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v35/d84>> (accessed on March 18, 2015).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Memorandum from Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld to President Ford, 113, *FRUS, 1969-1976* Vol. XXXV <<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v35/d113>> (accessed on March 18, 2015).

⁴⁰ "Interview with Kazuo Fujii," 1997, U.S.-Japan Project, Oral History Program, NSA <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/japan/fujii.pdf>> pp. 14-15 (accessed on October 20, 2015).

up its defense capability in line with the concept of maintaining various functions/functional and geographical balance, that would have been received as a development with less urgency that would not give rise to realistic concerns of the U.S. or Asian countries, given the then-prevailing view that “it is unlikely that they [Japan] could develop a self-sufficient defense capability in the next decade.” At any rate, the realization of the concept of complementarity set forth by the U.S. was to be sought through the formulation of the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation instead of intervening in the development of the 1976 NDPO.

Conclusion

This research mainly considered the relationship between the Japan-U.S. Alliance and Japan’s defense concepts in the 1970s. Firstly, the concept of repelling limited and small-scale aggression without external assistance, a component of the Basic Defense Force Concept, is not something that can be positioned as the call for Japan’s self-reliant defense against the Japan-U.S. Alliance system by its nature. It is, instead, consistent with the Japan-U.S. security arrangement in the sense that it is absolutely the concept for its defense buildup and an idea that is on a different dimension to the operation of the defense capability.

As for the reaction of the U.S., an ally, to Japan’s Basic Defense Force Concept, including the concept of maintaining various functions/functional and geographical balance, the U.S., under the concept of complementarity, adopted the policy of keeping Japan from embarking on the arbitrary strengthening of its defense capability while encouraging Japan to make greater efforts toward its defense, and did not actively thrust its nose into the development process of the 1976 Outline not only because U.S. pressure on Japan could invite backlash within Japan but also because it was thought that even under stronger U.S. pressure, Japan could not be expected to considerably enhance its defense capability. Instead, it can be argued that the U.S. was more interested in the actual size of Japan’s defense capability and the state of Japan-U.S. defense cooperation.

That said, while the Basic Defense Force Concept and the Japan-U.S. Alliance were not incoherent, the operational significance of the concept was not sufficiently considered at that point of time. As discussed earlier, the U.S. tolerance of the Basic Defense Force Concept was also for passive reasons.

Nevertheless, the Basic Defense Force Concept at that point of time had no small significance in the history of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. On October 16, 1951, immediately after the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, then Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida, touching on the relationship between the constitution and the right of self-defense, told the Diet that “now that Japan has become independent, the so-called right of self-defense is an indispensable and legitimate right.” Yoshida continued that “it is only natural for Japan to conclude a security

treaty as a result of the exercise of the right of self-defense.”⁴¹ Japan concluded the security treaty with the U.S. simultaneously with the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty. In brief, the essence of the security treaty was for “cooperation in goods and people,” in the words of Kumao Nishimura, Director-General of the Treaties Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time of the conclusion of the former Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, or the exchange of Japan's obligation to provide bases to the U.S. for the U.S. obligation to defend Japan (though this was not clearly specified in the former security treaty). The right of self-defense Prime Minister Yoshida mentioned in the Diet was the right of self-defense as the right of Japan to be defended by the U.S. after the conclusion of the peace treaty, and not enough consideration was given then to the exercise of the right of self-defense by Japan's own defense capability. The most important security role Japan should play at the time was to provide bases to the U.S. forces, and the significance and roles of Japan's right of self-defense and defense capability under the Japan-U.S. security arrangements were not clarified sufficiently (In fact, the “Basic Policy for National Defense (*kokubō no kihon hōshin*)” in 1957, the First Defense Buildup Plan in the same year or the Second Defense Buildup Plan in 1961 did not contain the wording of “deterrence” by Japan itself, the keyword in discussing Japan's present-day security policy). The Basic Defense Force Concept was the image of the role of Japan's own defense capability that Japan could at last set forth a quarter of a century after the end of the war, premised on the deterrent power of the Japan-U.S. security arrangements. It had the significance of forming a bridge from the years when the significance and roles of Japan's right of self-defense and defense capability under the Japan-U.S. security arrangement were not sufficiently clarified to the years when Japan would build deterrent power on its own or by Japan and the U.S. as one, as described in the “National Security Strategy of 2013” and the 2013 NDPG.

⁴¹ October 16, 1951, Responses of Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida to Questions in the Diet, the Plenary Session of the House of Representatives of the 12th Diet No. 5, the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors, *Kokkai Kaigiroku* [Conference Minutes of the Diet]. <http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/cgi-bin/KENSAKU/swk_dispdoc.cgi?SESSION=1766&SAVED_RID=1&PAGE=0&POS=0&TOTAL=0&SRV_ID=1&DOC_ID=35439&DPAGE=1&DTOTAL=1&DPOS=1&SORT_DIR=1&SORT_TYPE=0&MODE=1&DMY=2042> (accessed on August 22, 2016).

