

**The New Roles of the Armed Forces,
and Its Desirable Disposition**

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1. Introduction

Mr. Chairman, Presidents of defense universities, colleges and institutions in the ARF member countries, Ladies and Gentlemen! It is a great honor to address such a distinguished audience on a subject that has long been close to my heart.

To start with, I would like to discuss the experience we, the members of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF), have had in performing the roles and duties to which we have been assigned. Then I will review factors that have contributed to the expansion of the roles of the armed forces of different countries that have come to be universally accepted, and briefly touch on the character and disposition that armed forces should assume on in the course of performing such new roles.

2. The Experience of the Self-Defense Forces of Japan

(1) The National Defense Program Outline, and the Roles of the SDF

In Japan, the basic idea defining the posture of the SDF and the specific roles of the SDF is spelled out in the National Defense Program Outline (“the Outline”). However, as the international situation has changed profoundly since the end of the Cold War, the government revised the Outline in 1995 into the current one.

The new change written into the current Outline assigns the following new roles to the SDF, in addition to its traditional and fundamental role of defending our country.

(2) New Roles

Response to emergency situations, such as a large-scale disaster

The first role is to deal with emergency situations such as a large-scale disaster. In 1995, the year in which the current Outline was formulated, a couple of disasters occurred. In January that year, an earthquake meas-

uring 7.2 on the Richter scale hit the Kobe area and killed more than 6,400 people. A contingent of SDF units was dispatched on an urgent rescue mission. In March the same year, an indiscriminate terrorist attack by a cult group using deadly sarin gas was carried out in Tokyo's subway system killing 12 citizens and injuring more than 5,000 people. At that time, a contingent of SDF units was also dispatched to deal with the disaster. SDF units have played a vital role in dealing with disasters before, and the activities they carried out in these incidents helped heighten popular expectations for active involvement in rescue operations for disaster victims. In response, the government has decided to include in the Outline the dispatch of SDF units on rescue missions.

Contribution to building a more stable security environment

The second new role is to contribute to building a more stable security environment. On the basis of the alliance between Japan and the United States, the SDF are actively involved in a number of areas: (1) international peace cooperation work, (2) international disaster relief operations, (3) security dialogues and defense exchanges, and (4) cooperation in the area of arms control and disarmament.

The SDF began to carry out these activities in the early 1990s, and their involvement in such activities has been on the rise. The international peace cooperation assignments consist of the participation in U.N. peacekeeping operations and humanitarian international relief operations. The SDF dispatched a contingent of units to participate in U.N. peacekeeping efforts in Cambodia and Mozambique, and in humanitarian international relief operations in Zaire and Indonesia. At present, a contingent of SDF units is actively involved in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights. International disaster relief activities are designed to provide emergency aid to disaster victims of other countries. In this area, SDF contingents participated in rescue operations for hurricane victims in Honduras and earthquake victims in Turkey and India. Security dialogues and defense exchanges play a highly significant role in promoting confidence building among Asia-Pacific countries, and in removing factors that destabilize the international situation in this region. The Defense Agency and the SDF are actively in-

volved in security dialogues and defense exchanges among the countries of the region through bilateral and multilateral forums, including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). The Defense Agency considers participation in multilateral joint exercises as contributing to skills of the SDF for humanitarian relief and refugee rescue as well as mutual understanding and confidence building among all countries concerned. For instance, SDF units have just participated in the West Pacific submarine rescue exercise and the West Pacific minesweeping exercise organized by Singapore. In the area of arms control and disarmament, also, the SDF have been cooperating with various organizations. For instance, an officer of Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force, an expert on chemical protection, is serving as director of the Inspectorate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) based in The Hague, the Netherlands.

The role played by the SDF after the end of the Cold War has expanded, beyond the traditional role of defending the country, to deal with various disasters occurring within its borders and international cooperation as typified by U.N. peacekeeping operations.

3. Multiple Missions of the Armed Forces

Such expansion of the role of the armed forces is not confined to the SDF and has become a universal phenomenon that can be seen in the armed forces around the world. Indeed, armed forces around the world have come to accept the role of contributing to building a more stable security environment. The duty of regional armed forces may vary somewhat from country to country depending on the peculiar situation, but the universal phenomenon I just mentioned has underlying factors that are conducive to bringing it about. The most important one is the changes that have occurred in the international security environment since the end of the Cold War.

There were people who predicted the arrival of peace and stability immediately after the end of the Cold War, but unfortunately, actual events followed a reverse course. It may be said that in a certain sense, an anarchic tendency has increased in the international community. This is not to say that wars have increased among states. On the contrary, the danger of a major interstate war has sharply receded. Therefore, it has become

easier to build confidence among countries, and they are actively seeking to promote security dialogues and defense exchanges. At present, what actually poses problems is armed conflict between opposing factions within individual states. So much so that pressure is growing on the armed forces of other countries to step up their involvement in separating opposing camps in such conflict-ridden countries, in monitoring and enforcing cease-fires, in protecting refugees, and in providing humanitarian aid to such countries.

The anarchic tendency that has emerged in some countries after the end of the Cold War was manifested by organized violence resorted to by so-called non-state actors. The essential characteristic of modern states has been their ability to legitimately monopolize the use of organized violence since the Peace of Westphalia. More recently, however, there have emerged instances in which such state monopoly of organized violence has waned in some countries and armed bands within states, terrorists and pirates have come to use organized violence. Traditionally, it is the police's job to deal with such situations. However, the scale and power of these non-state actors is too large for the police of a country to control single-handedly, and this calls for the help of the armed forces. Suppressing organized violence by these non-state actors may be considered as a legitimate activity of the armed forces. The international community is mainly composed of sovereign states, each of which is given a secure status of a legitimate member of international society by mutual recognition of states. When any of them disintegrates from within or when any non-state actors uses organized violence, countries in the international community are trying to cooperate with such states in defusing such a situation. And the armed forces of countries concerned are mobilized for such purposes.

One of the main characteristics of today's international community is globalization: the diffusion of sophisticated weapons technology and communication means. This globalization has enabled non-state armed entities scattered across the world to cooperate with one another, and their employments of organized violence are posing serious problems to the world.

The same can be said of cross-border crimes such as drugs and human

trafficking. As cross-border linkage among crime syndicates of different countries spreads, instances of mobilizing armed forces to check their movements have increased. The armed forces have superior intelligence gathering capability than the police, and this is why armed forces are called on to deal with international crimes.

It is believed that such profound changes in the international community have been the most important factor in expanding the role of the armed forces of different countries.

4. The Character and Disposition Armed Forces Should Acquire

Last, I would like to discuss the type of character and disposition the armed forces of different countries and their officers should acquire to fulfill the diverse roles given to them.

The first is the internationally-minded outlook. A case in point is peacekeeping operations. Unless the armed forces of different countries cooperate with one another, they cannot fulfill their missions. Therefore, it is necessary for them to raise awareness of international affairs by maintaining regular contact among them.

The second is the necessity for armed forces to develop their ability to deal wisely with the civilian population. It is certain that opportunities for armed forces to come into contact with civilian populations in the course of performing their duties, such as peacekeeping operations and disaster relief operations, will increase in coming years. The importance of cooperation with the police, other domestic organizations or non-governmental organizations will increase. Therefore, it will be necessary for military personnel, particularly, commissioned officers, to deepen their understanding of civilian affairs and develop their competence to flexibly deal with civilian populations. The non-state entities are not composed of regular service personnel, but civilians armed with weapons. Such being the situation, members of regular armed forces are required to develop the ability to act in an environment where distinctions are blurring between regular soldiers and civilians, between individual crime and organized violence.

The third is skillful operational and tactical art. A commitment to a mission, especially a mission of international peace cooperation, which

has a possibility of suffering casualties, is tenuous. It is true that an immediate national interest is lacking or obscure in many of new missions. With this backdrop, when a contingent of the armed forces of any country suffers casualties, the commitment to the mission may lose the support of the public back home. Therefore, officers in charge of such contingents must have the operational and tactical competence to avert casualties.

Last, military personnel are expected to take pride in the service they perform for the defense of their country. Dealing with armed bands, terrorists and pirates is the job of the police, and relief of disaster victims does not exactly fit in with the conventional image of the military. But I believe that steps should be taken to motivate service personnel to carry out such duties with high pride. And this is an educational challenge the armed forces must come to grips with in coming years.

With this I conclude my remarks. Thank you for your kind attention.
