

## **Briefing Memo**

**Comparative Study of U.S. Military Advisory Group Activities in Establishing  
the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the ROK Armed Forces**

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### **Foreword**

Although Japan and Korea are not allies, the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the Republic of Korea (ROK) Armed Forces have been interacting with each other more and more in various fields ranging from individual levels to unit levels in recent years. However, it is not known very well through what processes these respective forces were established, and especially how the U.S., which occupied the two countries at that time, engaged in the processes involved. Specifically, Korea became an independent country after the World War II, and created its military organization in a short time under the guidance and advice of a U.S. military advisory group when establishing its new armed forces. On the other hand, Japan was given guidance and advice too much from a U.S. military advisory group during the process of evolving from the National Police Reserve through the National Safety Forces to the Self-Defense Forces to form its defense forces.

Hence, this paper will compare and study the U.S. military advisory groups' activities to clarify how they engaged in the formation of the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the ROK Armed Forces, and to elucidate the characteristics of the forming process of the defense/military organizations of Japan and Korea.

### **U.S. Military Advisory Group Activities in the Establishment of the ROK Armed Forces**

After the World War II, following the Truman Doctrine in 1947, the U.S. started providing military assistance to outside areas of Europe, and dispatched U.S. military advisory groups to countries receiving assistance from the U.S. to help building up their military forces. Along with this, U.S. Army Groups were sent to Turkey and Iran, and a Provisional Military Advisory Group (PMAG) was established in Korea on August 24, 1948. Then, after the completion of the withdrawal of U.S. armed forces in Korea at the end of June 1949, a U.S. Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea (KMAG) was established, and continued its military advisory activities for about 23 years until it was merged into a Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group-Korea (JUSMAG-K) on April 1, 1971.

The main mission of the U.S. Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea was to provide guidance and advisory activities for the ROK Armed Forces as well as to

develop military assistance programs for Korea overseeing their smooth implementations.

To accomplish these missions, the U.S. Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea assumed the management of various military fields such as the formations, operations, educational training and logistics activities of the ROK Armed Forces as its activity areas, and made the ROK Armed Forces to completely follow their plans and decisions through the Counterpart System in which the group provides guidance and advice to the ROK Armed Forces in a one-to-one method. In particular, before the outbreak of Korean War, the U.S. Military Advisory Group put emphasis on guiding the educational training of the ROK Armed Forces, and influenced the ROK Armed Forces through developing and implementing systematic training programs for individual divisions of the ROK Armed Forces. In addition, they established various military academies, provided educational direction, and dispatched Korean officers abroad for military studies. The group also put emphasis on providing operational assistance to the ROK Armed Forces, and exerted direct and indirect influences on assistance for asymmetric warfare against North Korean guerrillas and the development of defense plans for the ROK Armed Forces.

#### **U.S. Military Advisory Group Activities in the Establishment of the Japan Self-Defense Forces**

It started rearming Japan immediately after the outbreak of Korean War on June 25, 1950. The formation of the National Police Reserve was initiated when MacArthur's letter was sent to Prime Minister Yoshida. The approach the U.S. adopted to establish the National Police Reserve was a well proven military advisory group's approach similar to those used to establish military forces in Europe, Turkey and Korea. In particular, the U.S. military advisory group actively engaged in establishing a ground force evolving from the National Police Reserve through the National Safety Forces to the Ground Self-Defense Force.

When establishing the National Police Reserve, the Civil Affairs Section Annex (CASA) was organized under the GHQ, for which about 60 officers worked in the headquarters to support the formation and training of the National Police Reserve, for example, by assisting officer recruitment, acceptance preparation, educational training and equipment procurement. At the beginning, when the National Police Reserve was established, U.S. advisors acted as Camp commanders for individual stationed units, and were in charge of forming, managing and training individual units of the National Police Reserve. As Japan was gradually allowed to formally assign senior officials, appoint commanders and organize force units, the advisors' position changed from Camp Commanders to Camp Advisors, and they mainly provided assistance and advice. Furthermore, the GHQ was disbanded as the San Francisco Peace Treaty entered into force in April 1952, and the Safety Advisory Section Japan (SASJ) was organized when the National Police Reserve was transformed into the National Safety Forces in October 1952. In 1953, it was renamed as the Safety Advisory Group Japan (SAGJ) and engaged

in training and guiding the National Safety Forces. Then, when the U.S. and Japan Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (MSA Agreement) was concluded in May 1954, the establishment of a U.S. military advisory group was formally defined in accordance with Article 7 of the MSA Agreement, and a Military Assistance Advisory Group Japan (MAAGJ) was organized under the U.S. embassy in Japan. In addition, the MAAGJ had its headquarters with ground, maritime and air force sections co-located with, and became an organization which provided military guidance and advice to, the Japan Ground, Maritime and Air Self-Defense Forces individually.

The mission of the U.S. military advisory group in Japan initially included officer recruitment and acceptance, educational training, and equipment procurement when the National Police Reserve was established. In particular, with regard to the educational training, it established the Etajima School, the Etchujima School (common name) and the Tokyo Commander School to provide educational courses for management and engineering. In addition, regarding the educational training at camps, the U.S. advisory group prepared for training programs, procurement and distribution of training manuals, while educational training was conducted under the direction and supervision of U.S. commissioned officers for individual camps.

### **Comparison of the Activities of the U.S. Military Advisory Groups in Japan and Korea**

Firstly, considering the process of how the military advisory groups were accepted, it can be concluded that while Korea actively accepted U.S. military advisory group to compensate for the retreat of U.S. military forces from the country in order for the ROK army to establish a formal military force based on the Law for National Military Force Organization, Japan accepted its military advisory group in a limited manner, for example, by requesting a decrease in the number of the group's members, so that Japanese people did not feel as if the U.S.'s occupation of Japan was still ongoing.

Secondly, the organizations of the U.S. military advisory groups were compared. In the case of Korea, general staff offices and special general staff offices were established under the military advisory group's leadership serving as a commander, similar to an ordinary military case. This organizational structure could imply that the mission of the U.S. military advisory group to the Republic of Korea (JUSMAG-K) was not only to build up the ROK Army and to deliver military equipment, but also to provide direct guidance and supervision concerning educational training for ROK Army units and to assist attack operations conducted by the ROK Army against North Korean guerrillas. It could also imply that these guidance and advice smoothly accomplished through the Counterpart System. On the other hand, when the U.S. military advisory group in Japan is examined, with the MAAGJ being taken as an example, both the group leader secretariat whose director was a chief of staff, and the sections of army, marine and air forces, which were the counterparts of the Ground, Maritime and Air Self-Defense Forces, were established under the advisory group's leader. The organizational structure was far from an ordinary military structure, but rather close to a civil administrative organization. In addition, with regard to the chain of command, it

was under the direction and oversight of the U.S. embassy in Japan.

Thirdly, the activities of the U.S. military advisory groups were compared. The U.S. military advisory group in Korea initially put emphasis on the guidance of educational training of the ROK Army and assistance for asymmetric war operations, but after the U.S. Mutual Defense Assistance Act came into effect in 1949, it assumed the role of assisting the U.S. ambassador to Korea and to prepare details of additional military assistance for Korea, in relation to the administration of a mutual defense assistance program. On the other hand, in the case of Japan, the U.S. military advisory group initially put emphasis on the guidance of educational training for army troops and the assistance in the loan and procurement of U.S. military equipment. Then, its role went beyond military aspects, and expanded to cover political and diplomatic ones as new activities after the Military Assistance Advisory Group Japan (MAAGJ) was founded. Specifically, those included (1) to coordinate with the U.S. embassy in Japan concerning the MAAGJ's chain of command, (2) to promote the awareness of Japanese people towards national defense needs and implement the retreat of U.S. military forces from Japan along with the starting up of Self-Defense Forces, and (3) to build up defense production lines in the Japanese economic system.

### Conclusion

The roles and activities of the U.S. military advisory groups in Japan and that in Korea were compared and studied as described above. Since then, the ROK Army and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, which were founded by their respective U.S. military advisory groups, have become autonomous, and they now have strong ties with the U.S. However, how many people know of the activities of the groups when the ROK Army and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force were founded? In the future, when the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the ROK Armed Forces will interact with each other, it may be important for them to fully understand their respective founding histories, including the activities of their respective U.S. military advisory groups, and recognize what each have in common and where they differ.

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