

## **Chapter 8**

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# **Japan— Toward More Effective International Cooperation**



The basic course of action to be followed by Japan's defense policy is set forth in the *National Defense Program Guidelines* (NDPG). The third and latest NDPG, which was adopted in 2004 (the 2004 NDPG) and follows the first NDPG issued in 1976 and the second in 1995, was revised to reflect changes that occurred in the international situation after the end of the Cold War. The basic concept of the 2004 NDPG is that merely providing against a full-scale invasion of Japan is an anachronism when coping with the "new threats and diverse situations" of the 21st century, which is witnessing the globalization of security.

Defending Japan remains the top priority for the Self-Defense Forces (SDF). However, it is inconceivable that a full-scale attack on Japan, a scenario envisaged in the Cold War era, would ever be carried out by a hostile country. Rather, in the security environment now prevailing, there is an increasing necessity to provide against the "new threats and diverse situations" such as a ballistic missile attack or an invasion of Japan's offshore islands. Given that, the government has changed the force structure and resource-allocation priorities within budgetary constraints.

Another characteristic of the 2004 NDPG is the emphasis it places on Japan's more proactive involvement in addressing global security problems through cooperation with its ally the United States and the international community. In a highly globalized world, were the SDF to specialize solely in the defense of the homeland, it could hardly defend Japan's overall security. The SDF must expand and deepen international cooperation and deal with regional and global security problems. This idea was originally conceived in the 1995 NDPG, and the 2004 NDPG promotes it further.

## **1. Features of the 2004 National Defense Program Guidelines**

### **(1) Changes since the 1995 NDPG**

Since—and due to—the end of the Cold War, the framework of international security has changed. The 1995 NDPG had already prescribed steps to be taken to respond to the challenges brought about by such a transformation, but during the past 10 years domestic and international situations have undergone a sea change, raising the necessity to scrutinize the 1995 NDPG more closely.

The first half of the 1990s that immediately followed the end of the Cold War was a transitional period leading to the development of a new international order. In those days neither the role Japan was to play in maintaining security in East Asia, nor the form and extent of US commitment to Asia-Pacific regional security, were clearly defined. Nor was there a forum for discussing the region's security problems. Meanwhile, situations liable to breed a sense of regional insecurity—the uncertainties on the Korean Peninsula and in the Taiwan Strait—have emerged. In other words, the 1995 NDPG was formulated in a transitional period when Japan was searching for an appropriate regional security model in East Asia, where the security environment was unpredictable and uncertain.

In the 10 years since the 1995 NDPG was formulated, the security environment in East Asia has changed considerably. For one thing, North Korea's nuclear development program still remains a factor that casts a cloud over the security of the Korean Peninsula and the region as a whole. Ten years ago, there had merely been suspicions that North Korea was developing nuclear weapons, but today the suspicions surround North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, over the past decade China has been actively pressing ahead with an air force and navy modernization program by taking advantage of its rapidly growing economic strength—to such an extent, in fact, that careful assessment should be made to see whether or not the goals of the modernization of its armed forces are exceeding the limits necessary for its defense, and a watchful eye must be kept on such trends in the coming years (see Japan's *2005 Defense White Paper*). New threats—the international terrorist activities of non-state actors—have emerged in recent years that cannot be effectively dealt with by traditional deterrence. Therefore, compared with the opaque and unpredictable security environment that was apparent at the time the 1995 NDPG was formulated, fears about the instability of the present security environment have actually increased, not abated.

In the second half of the 1990s, the United States expressed its long-term commitment to the security of the Asia-Pacific region (the Nye Initiative) and, in keeping with such a commitment, created a framework for dealing with factors that could destabilize the regional situation by reaffirming the Japan-US alliance and by formulating Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation. In the international arena, a tendency to deal with security threats by utilizing international cooperative frameworks—the United Nations, cooperation based on alliances, cooperation among countries that share a sense of common threat (“coalitions of the willing”), and region-wide cooperation like the Six-party Talks—has grown stronger over the past 10 years. On the domestic front, public support for the international peace cooperation activities of the SDF—SDF units have participated in several UN peacekeeping operations (PKO)—has taken hold. An international approach to building a stable international environment has thus gathered momentum much more markedly than 10 years ago. The 2004 NDPG was formulated by taking into account the positive and negative changes that have occurred in the security environment.

### **(2) Three Approaches of the 2004 NDPG**

The thinking that underlies the 2004 NDPG may be summed up as follows (for details, see the *2005 Defense White Paper*). One major characteristic is a change in the perception of threat. The 2004 NDPG attaches importance to dealing with the expanded scope of new threats and diverse situations (such as a ballistic missile attack and an invasion of Japan's offshore islands), although the high-intensity threat of a full-scale landing invasion of Japan by a hostile country has diminished. As a defense concept to provide against such situations, the 2004 NDPG proposes a defense force concept built around three keywords: multifunctionality, flexibility, and effectiveness. As some of the new threats and diverse situations, such as terrorist attacks by non-state actors, are difficult to deter by traditional military means, a defense posture focusing on deterrence cannot meet all security requirements in the current strategic environment. Therefore, it is necessary to build a defense posture that can react promptly if such situations actually occur.

The 2004 NDPG clearly articulates the two objectives in Japan's security policy: the first is to prevent any threat from reaching Japan, to repel it, and, should it reach Japan, to minimize the damage caused; the second being to

improve the international security environment to minimize the chances of any threat reaching Japan. The 2004 NDPG further notes that Japan should pursue the two objectives by combining three approaches: Japan's own efforts, cooperation with the United States, and cooperation with the international community. In the 21st century, security problems have taken on global dimensions—so much so that Japan's own efforts alone cannot cope with new threats such as international terrorism. Therefore, international cooperation has to be deepened in order to deal with regional and global security threats. It is for this reason that the 2004 NDPG is aimed at proactively strengthening Japan's involvement in solving global security problems through actively enhancing cooperation with the United States and the international community.

### **(3) SDF's Support Activities: Disaster Relief and the War on Terror**

The Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami of December 26, 2004, devastated the coastline areas of several littoral states on the Indian Ocean. One could say that 2005 dawned with the disaster relief activities provided by a number of countries to the affected areas. On Japan's part, three Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) vessels that had been returning from their logistic mission in support of the war on terrorism in the Indian Ocean immediately carried out a search-and-rescue operation. They recovered the bodies of 57 victims and handed them over to the authorities in Thailand, where a 12-member Japanese international disaster relief unit and its equipment were airlifted from Kao Lak to Pi Pi Island. On January 4, 2005, advance parties were dispatched to Thailand and Indonesia to prepare for the arrival of Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) contingents. On January 6, the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) dispatched C-130H transport aircraft, which started relief operations on January 10 and airlifted about 240 tons of goods (food, medicine, etc.), 413 people, and one vehicle. On the basis of reports sent back by advanced parties, the transport ship *Kunisaki*, carrying a GSDF helicopter unit, a medical unit, and a communicable disease control unit, left Japan on January 12, arrived off the coast of Sumatra on January 24, and carried out relief activities from January 26. The GSDF airlifted about 160 tons of aid goods (food, medicine, tents, etc.) and 1,570 people using CH-47JA transport helicopters and UH-60JA multipurpose helicopters, and the MSDF transported 1.3 tons of aid goods (food and potable water, etc.), 128 personnel, and 34 pieces of heavy equipment (dump trucks, power shovels, etc.) on board the *Kunisaki*, air-cushioned landing craft

(LCAC), and SH-60J shipborne helicopters. In addition, on January 14 some members of the GSDF contingent were airlifted as members of a medical team, who administered first aid from January 19 through 28. They treated about 6,000 patients and vaccinated about 2,300 people against various infectious

**An MSDF LCAC transports GSDF vehicles in Banda Aceh, Indonesia (January 27, 2005).** (Kyodo Photo)

diseases. On January 29, they carried out infectious disease control activities and an area of about 130,000 square meters in the city of Banda Aceh was sterilized.

The international community carried out another round of large-scale disaster relief activities after a massive earthquake hit a large area of Pakistan and the northern part of India on October 8, 2005. The following day, Pakistan President Pervez Musharaff issued a statement calling on the international community to send transport helicopters for disaster relief. As the earthquake had rendered impassable many roads to remote affected areas, a large number of transport helicopters were needed to airlift tents, blankets, nonperishable foods, medicine, and relief-aid workers. In response to President Musharaff's request, Japan decided to dispatch three UH-1 multipurpose helicopters. An advance party left for Pakistan on October 12, two C-130Hs carrying disassembled helicopters were dispatched on October 13, and two more C-130Hs and two ASDF B-747s carrying personnel and aid goods followed on October 14. The B-747s arrived at their destination on the same day, the C-130Hs on October 15 and 16, respectively, after refueling and overnight stopovers at Naha (Okinawa), Bangkok, Calcutta, and Delhi. Immediately after arrival, the helicopters were assembled, test flown on October 16, and started relief airlift operations on October 17. As the need for helicopters mounted, the Japanese government decided to dispatch three more UH-1 helicopters, so two C-130Hs were sent on both October 21 and 22, arriving on October 23 and 24, and the helicopters commenced operations on October 25. They were mainly engaged in airlifting relief goods from Islamabad to Badagram, about 100 kilometers to the northwest. On November 14, the Japanese government issued an order declaring an end to the relief activities, and the SDF units dispatched to Pakistan returned to Japan on December 1, 2005. In the process,

they transported about 40 tons of relief goods and 720 people.

**A GSDF UH-1 multipurpose helicopter airlifts disaster victims injured by the Pakistan earthquake.** (Kyodo Photo)

In addition to these disaster relief operations, the SDF continued its operations in the Indian Ocean and Iraq, the former having been conducted pursuant to the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law since November 2001. As the law was originally given a two-year time

limit, it was extended in October 2003 for another two years, until November 1, 2005. However, the war on terrorism in Afghanistan still continues. As only a small number of countries have supply ships, and as maritime interdiction operations by the naval vessels of various countries intercepting the movement of terrorists and their weapons as part of the war on terrorism have played an effective role in checking the spread of terrorist threats to other countries (according to remarks made by then Minister of State for Defense Yoshinori Ohno), the government submitted an amendment to the law to enable the SDF to carry out its operations in the Indian Ocean for another year, and the Diet ratified this on October 26, 2005.

The main missions the MSDF ships carry out pursuant to the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law are refueling naval vessels of the 11 countries, including those of the United States, operating in the Indian Ocean and airlifting materiel for US and other forces. During any given period, the MSDF has on station a group of two to three supply ships and destroyers, and the total accumulated number of such ships dispatched to the Indian Ocean has so far amounted to 49. Of these, the supply ships *Towada* and *Hamana* have each been dispatched five times.

The MSDF vessels are supporting maritime interdiction operations in the Indian Ocean to intercept terrorist organization shipments of weapons and drugs for financing terrorist activities. Refueling at sea as conducted by the MSDF vessels, simple though it may appear, plays a vital role. In order to carry out sea policing duties effectively, a large number of naval vessels and aircraft must be used to exercise surveillance over as wide an area as possible. However, when ships in need of refueling have to return to a nearby port, other ships would

normally have to be dispatched to take their place. Therefore, refueling at sea obviates the necessity for them to leave their area of responsibility and the MSDF ships are helping the countries conducting maritime interdiction increase the percentage of their ships on constant duty. Such being the case, the activities carried out by the MSDF are highly significant in the war against terrorism.

In Iraq, also, Japan has been carrying out international peace cooperation activities pursuant to the Law Concerning Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq. Promulgated in August 2003, this law authorizes the government to extend humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Iraq, in accordance with the basic operation plan decided by the cabinet in December the same year, by dispatching a maximum of 600 GSDF troops, a maximum of eight ASDF aircraft, and a maximum of two transport ships and two destroyers to carry out humanitarian and reconstruction activities. This law expires after four years in 2007, and the basic operation plan was supposed to end on December 14, 2005. However, Japan should fulfill its duty as a member of the international community by assisting the Iraqis until such time as a democratic and stable government has been established in Iraq, as preventing the country from becoming a hotbed of terrorism and developing it into a peaceful and democratic state is of great significance for the stability of the international community and is in Japan's interest (as Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi noted). On this basis, the cabinet decided on December 8, 2005, to amend the basic plan to extend the SDF troop deployment period for another year. Under the current basic plan, the GSDF has dispatched units to support Iraqi reconstruction that rotate once either every three months or every six months, to carry out medical and water supply activities, to rebuild public facilities (like schools and water purification plants), and for transportation. The ASDF has dispatched an air transport unit (three C-130H transport aircraft) to airlift supplies for the GSDF units, humanitarian aid goods, and personnel. This was the first-ever involvement of the SDF in overseas humanitarian reconstruction activities, and by working with the official development assistance (ODA) as the "two wheels of the same shaft," their activities have achieved excellent results and been highly appreciated by the governments of Iraq and the United States as well as the international community.

In addition, the SDF has dispatched its units on a continuing basis to the UN Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights.

## **2. Maintaining Security through International Cooperation**

### **(1) Significance of Cooperation with the International Community**

The 1995 NDPG also included the “creation of a more stable security environment” through international peace cooperation activities and security dialogue/defense exchanges among the roles of Japan’s defense capabilities. Therefore, the idea of security through cooperation with the international community was not an entirely new concept to the drafters of the 2004 NDPG. However, the 1995 NDPG did not clearly set out how cooperation with the international community should contribute to Japan’s overall security policy. Unlike its previous version, the 2004 NDPG clearly states that Japan’s basic policy for ensuring security is to effectively integrate three measures: cooperation with the international community, Japan’s own effort, and cooperation with the United States. Through these efforts, Japan, as a responsible member of the international community, would play a vital role in creating a peace and stable world.

To achieve the first of the two objectives set out in the 2004 NDPG—to prevent any threat from reaching Japan, to repel it and minimize any damage that may be inflicted on Japan should such an event occur—requires more direct and more physical means. On the other hand, for the second objective—to improve the international security environment to minimize the chances of any threat reaching Japan—importance should be placed on preventing elements of latent or long-term potential threat from materializing by using any and comprehensive means at Japan’s disposal, rather than dealing with present, direct, and clearly defined threats. Examples of this include: preventing threats that could materialize from a destabilized regional or global security environment by establishing a stable security environment through international peace cooperation, security dialogues, and defense exchanges; and dealing with challenges to the international community posed by international terrorists or with transnational threats posed by maritime piracy or natural disasters through regional or global cooperation.

One of the main objectives of the new defense capability concept encapsulated in the key words—multifunctionality, flexibility, and effectiveness—is to promote cooperation with the international community, but it is not a panacea. Such efforts must be complemented by selective allocation of resources—prioritized in relevance to the importance for Japan’s security. This means that prioritizing has become important in cooperation with the international community. In this

context, the *2005 Defense White Paper* no longer defines Japan's cooperation with the international community as a "contribution," the term normally used to describe the SDF's activities for global securities, which left the impression that Japan engaged in such activities only for the sake of others. Japan will conduct international cooperation with emphasis on its relevance to its own security. In other words, the priority with respect to SDF international cooperation activities is to be determined by evaluating how much the activities affect or improve Japan's national security.

In the age of globalization, events in regions distant from Japan can sometimes have unexpected impacts on Japan. For instance, the Japanese public's perception of the effect of events in Afghanistan on Japan's security before the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States was far different from what the public felt after them. Under the existing security environment, Japan must promote cooperation with the international community on the basis of continuous examination of its impact on Japan's national security. What is needed to effectively promote cooperation with the international community is a legal framework that is conducive to quick decision-making at the political level, a defense posture with a high level of readiness, and a peacetime international security cooperation mechanism that facilitates actual action should it need to be taken.

## **(2) International Peace Cooperation Activities**

The term "international peace cooperation activities" is defined in the 2004 NDPG as "activities that the nations of the world cooperatively undertake to enhance the international community for the purpose of improving the international security environment." The 2004 NDPG states that Japan should voluntarily and actively participate in these activities. More specifically, Japan will seek to stabilize the security environment in unstable regions by participating in peacekeeping operations, to prevent potential threats from materializing, and to deal with common threats facing the international community such as terrorism, maritime piracy, and natural disasters by participating in international cooperative frameworks. In Japan's case, such activities will be carried out within the scope prescribed by its constitution and in a form short of using force. Therefore, in the event that Japan is called upon to participate in an international cooperative effort that entails the use of force, Japan will play an auxiliary and complementary role in the international cooperation framework to achieve the objective without any

activity that could be legally regarded as integrating the use of force, which is the basic principle of SDF overseas activities.

Up to now, with the exception of those activities carried out as part of PKO under the International Peace Cooperation Law or humanitarian international assistance activities under the International Disaster Relief Law, Japan has carried out its international peace cooperation activities by enacting a purpose-specific special measures law each time the need has arisen, such as the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law of 2001 and the Law Concerning Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq of 2003. Taking this into consideration, there has been ongoing debate in Japan regarding the necessity of enacting a comprehensive law that would encompass the overall international peace cooperation activities of the SDF to systematize the security policy based on cooperation with the international community.

International peace cooperation activities are by their very nature varied and wide-ranging. The International Peace Cooperation Law covers PKO, humanitarian relief, and election monitoring duties, meanwhile the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law deals with cooperation and support for forces engaging in antiterrorism operations (including refueling at sea), search and rescue, and disaster relief activities for affected people. The Law Concerning Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq covers humanitarian and reconstruction assistance activities and support activities for forces engaged in restoring safety and stability in Iraq. In addition, international disaster relief activities carried out pursuant to the International Disaster Relief Law are an important aspect of the international peace cooperation activities. The SDF thus is already carrying out “multifunctional” activities within the framework of Japan’s international peace cooperation and logistical support activities.

What is more, the experience SDF units have gained from the rehabilitation work in Iraq has made the Japanese government keenly aware of the importance of effectively combining international peace cooperation activities and ODA. Reflecting this awareness, the 2004 NDPG states “In order to improve the international security environment and help maintain security and prosperity of Japan, the Government of Japan will actively carry out diplomatic efforts, including the strategic use of ODA.” In Iraq, activities by SDF contingents and ODA projects are carried out side-by-side as “two wheels of the same shaft.” Staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in charge of ODA are camped within

**GSDF troops join local residents celebrating the completion of GSDF repair work on a school in Iraq.**  
(Kyodo Photo)

the SDF compound in Samawah, Iraq, and are actively involved in ascertaining ODA needs in cooperation with SDF troops. Initially, ODA projects had been geared toward providing aid materials under Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects. Subsequently, as the scale of their operation increased with the addition of emergency aid, they stepped up cooperation with the

GSDF units. As the reconstruction of local infrastructure began to gather momentum, the necessity for a large-scale ODA project designed to accelerate the process and boost the employment of local workers has mounted.

One example that illustrates the close coordination between GSDF units and ODA teams in Iraq is water supply activities. Initially, GSDF personnel carried out the water supply activities in Samawah, supplying 250 tons of potable water a day. After ODA-funded water supply facilities had been built in February 2005, they supplied 3,000 tons a day. When Japan provided medical equipment to Iraq under an ODA project, GSDF medical officers gave local medical personnel instructions on how to use it. When the GSDF unit planned to rebuild roads in the area, ODA was used for their costly paving with asphalt after the GSDF unit had completed the leveling of roadbeds.

In providing reconstruction assistance, a community's situation must be stabilized, for which job creation is the key. However, the activities of GSDF units alone are not enough to create jobs in the area, because the GSDF unit dispatched to Iraq is basically a self-contained organization with a small budget for and little need to hire outside help. The GSDF unit dispatched to Samawah has been hiring 700 to 1,000 local workers a day, but it is difficult for the unit to offer jobs on a stable and ongoing basis. This is where the ODA project comes into the picture. Japan has already committed about \$5 billion in ODA funds to Iraq (about \$1.5 billion in grants-in-aid and about \$3.5 billion in yen credits) and, if properly used, these are expected to greatly contribute to job creation and stabilizing the local situation. Japan's reconstruction assistance extended to Iraq effectively combined

“the two wheels of the same shaft”—the activities of the GSDF and ODA projects—to produce significant results. In this sense, the results the coordinated GSDF/ODA efforts have achieved thus far suggest one model of Japan’s international peace cooperation activities in the future. It is to be hoped that the government will study the ways and means to enhance the multiplier effect of the two elements.

The Japan Defense Agency (JDA)/SDF have been carrying out international disaster relief activities from the standpoint of making a contribution to humanitarian assistance and improving the international security environment. The term “international disaster relief activities” refers to rescue and relief and medical activities in the aftermath of a large-scale natural disaster in another country, particularly a developing country, in response to a request from the affected country. The governing International Disaster Relief Law was enacted in 1987, and by virtue of a 1992 amendment, the SDF is authorized to carry out international disaster relief activities and to transport personnel, materiel, and equipment for such activities.

The mission of the Japan Disaster Relief Team (JDRT) organized pursuant to the law, the scale of its activities, and the duration of its deployment are decided with due consideration to the requests of the affected countries. However, should the Japanese government decide that SDF units earmarked to form part of a JDRT would need to carry arms to protect themselves due to the dangers posed by the lack of law and order in the host country, they will not be dispatched. Basically, SDF units are supposed to be dispatched to developing countries in Asia and Oceania, but Japan dispatches its SDF units to other regions as required, depending on the situation prevailing in such regions. In fact, Japan dispatched SDF units to Honduras in 1998 to assist hurricane victims, to northwestern Turkey for relief activities following the earthquake in 1999, and to the Sea of Okhotsk, Russia, in 2005 to rescue a submersible.

All three SDF services are prepared for international disaster relief activities. The GSDF maintains on standby 13 medical officers, two UH-1 multipurpose helicopters, three CH-47 transport helicopters, and two sets of water purification equipment, the MSDF two transport ships (or one in the event that *Osumi* is employed) and one supply ship, and the ASDF six C-130H transport aircraft.

### **(3) Security Dialogues and Defense Exchanges**

Also underpinning Japan's cooperation with the international community are security dialogues and defense exchanges designed to build trust among countries and strengthen cooperation. The main objectives are to prevent arms races and the occurrence of contingencies by deepening mutual trust among countries by improving the transparency of their military strength and defense policies and through dialogues and exchanges of defense officials. More recently, security dialogues and defense exchanges have played an important role in building an international security cooperation framework to deal with natural disasters and the increasing transnational threats posed by international terrorism and piracy.

Pursuant to the 1995 NDPG, which defined "building a more stable international security environment" as one of the roles to be played by its defense capabilities, Japan has been actively promoting security dialogues and defense exchanges with other countries. They include: bilateral defense exchanges, which can be tailored to each country and can form a foundation for developing multilateral security dialogues; and multilateral security dialogues, which can serve as a forum where participants can bring an issue of common interest for discussion, thereby enhancing regional peace and stability. The defense exchanges and security dialogues that Japan conducts vary and include defense-ministerial meetings to unit-level contacts.

Deepening mutual understanding with and learning the differences of other parties through security dialogues and defense exchanges are effective ways of improving the predictability of others' military moves, of preventing a situation from worsening, and of facilitating cooperation between the countries involved to improve the situation. In the case of Japan, for instance, when Japan and the United States formulated the current Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation in 1997, or when Japan formulated its 2004 NDPG, Japan made its policy objectives clear to other countries through dialogues and exchanges to help dispel other countries' unfounded concerns about Japan's defense policy.

The building of trust is not the sole aim of such security dialogues and defense exchanges. In recent years, they have performed the function of creating a foundation for concrete international cooperation in dealing with natural disasters and transnational threats. In the Asia-Pacific region, the piracy problem in the Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in 2004 have been of particular help in fostering the tendency toward region-wide cooperation in

dealing with such problems. For instance, the Tokyo Defense Forum, which has held under the JDA's auspices in June 2005, focused on the issue of the roles of militaries in disaster relief and future regional cooperation.

In parallel with these efforts, unit-level exchanges have also been carried out. Japan has conducted search-and-rescue exercises with South Korea and Russia, and SDF units undertook close exchanges with their Australian counterparts in East Timor and Iraq. The United States conducted a Team Challenge multinational exercise in 2001 and has conducted an annual multinational command-post phase of the Cobra Gold exercise with Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries since 2000. Japan formally participated in the command-post phase in 2005. The experience militaries accumulate through such exercises will make unit-level cooperation and coordination effective in the event of an emergency.

For instance, the PKO in East Timor in 1999 and in the Solomon Islands in 2002 were carried out by multinational forces. As demonstrated by the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in December 2004 and the Pakistan earthquake in October 2005, international relief operations during a large-scale disaster can be carried out by militaries and civilian relief organizations working in cooperation with one another. There is a possibility that many countries will get together to deal with transnational threats. In the Asia-Pacific region, there will be increasing opportunities for militaries, civilian agencies, and nongovernmental relief organizations of different countries to join forces to provide relief to disaster victims and affected areas. It is desirable that, if only to facilitate such joint activities, countries in the region take steps to improve the interoperability of their armed forces by promoting mutual defense exchanges. This being the case, security dialogues and defense exchanges have gained in importance as a basis for promoting international peace cooperation activities.

### **3. Efforts toward More Effective International Cooperation**

#### **(1) Legal System Reorientation**

Cooperation with the international community has become increasingly important for maintaining Japan's security. Traditional means are not always effective in deterring transnational threats, not to mention the response to natural disasters. Generally speaking, preventing a potential threat from materializing is the best policy, but it is conceivable that situations compelling countries to cope with such

a threat after it has actually occurred will arise. Therefore, Japan must first define international efforts to contain and eliminate such threats as issues closely tied to its own security, establish a legal framework that will facilitate its proactive response to them, and then create an SDF posture that can quickly implement decisions, once they have been made by the political leadership.

Two ideas are being discussed with regard to the legal standing of the SDF's international peace cooperation activities. One is to amend the existing legislation to make these activities one of the SDF's primary missions, the other is to enact a permanent and comprehensive law governing SDF international peace cooperation activities as a whole. At the time the International Peace Cooperation Law was enacted in 1992, international peace cooperation activities to be conducted pursuant to it were defined as a secondary SDF mission on the grounds that such activities should be carried out by drawing on the SDF's long-accumulated capabilities, experience, and organizational functions for statutory primary missions such as territorial defense and domestic disaster relief, but be limited in so far as they would not impinge on the SDF's ability to carry out its primary mission. As a result, provisions governing SDF international peace cooperation activities were not placed in Chapter 6 of the Self-Defense Forces Law, which prescribes the primary missions of the SDF, but in Chapter 8, which stipulates miscellaneous rules governing the SDF. The idea now is to change the existing legislation to make international peace cooperation activities a primary SDF mission, together with the defense of Japan and disaster relief.

The 2004 NDPG, which establishes the basic framework for building Japan's defense capabilities, defines cooperation with the international community as one of the pillars underpinning Japan's basic defense policy, and international peace cooperation activities will play an important role within that framework. In transforming the SDF posture in accordance with the basic policy of the 2004 NDPG, it is important to review the status of international peace cooperation activities in the Self-Defense Forces Law as a secondary mission drawing on the surplus capacity of the SDF. If the Self-Defense Forces Law clearly defines international peace cooperation activities as a primary SDF mission, it will provide a legal basis for supporting the change in defense posture envisaged in the 2004 NDPG. That would give the international community a clear signal that Japan will actively participate in international cooperation and encourage SDF personnel to carry out international peace cooperation activities with greater confidence and

pride. Therefore, defining international peace cooperation as a primary SDF mission is a matter the government should address as soon as possible.

Another idea is to enact a comprehensive permanent law that would govern the entire range of the SDF's international peace cooperation activities. As noted in the foregoing, the SDF activities carried out in both the Indian Ocean and in Iraq are based on special measures laws, which are limited in scope and duration. The question as to whether the government should enact such special measures laws each time Japan is called upon to cooperate with the international community or formulate a comprehensive, more permanent law is a task that cannot be put off any longer, given the increasing importance of international peace cooperation activities.

The biggest advantage that would be derived from enacting such a comprehensive law is that it would explicitly set forth the underlying ideas and principles as well as the mode of Japan's international peace cooperation. It would also enable the JDA/SDF to create an overall framework, organize and train units, recruit and train personnel, and procure materials and equipment in a way better suited to the mission. This would facilitate effective implementation of Japan's international peace cooperation activities and the effective utilization of the resources at Japan's disposal. As this would obviate the time-consuming procedures to enact a special measures law each time the situation arose, Japan would be able to expeditiously undertake international peace cooperation activities. Such being the case, there is a pressing need to enact a comprehensive law.

As noted earlier, the term "international peace cooperation activities" includes a wide range of activities. As Japan's security-related laws adopt a positive-list approach, which enumerates things the country is authorized to carry out, a comprehensive law relating to international peace cooperation must specify those activities to be carried out by the SDF. Should unforeseen activities under the comprehensive law arise, it will either be amended or a special measures law enacted to authorize the SDF to carry out such activities.

In addition, there are several issues yet to be addressed, such as the level of Diet involvement in deciding to dispatch SDF units for international peace cooperation activities and in the formulation of a basic plan for such activities, the relationship between Japan's decision to send the SDF for international peace cooperation activities and the relevant UN Security Council resolution, the scope of the SDF mission, and its rules of engagement. Some significant issues remain open to

public debate. They include: what Japan requires to effectively carry out international peace cooperation activities, to enhance the legitimacy of such activities domestically from the standpoint of democratic control, or to ensure their international legitimacy.

## **(2) Building a Ready Defense Posture**

The work of building a defense posture that attaches greater importance to international peace cooperation activities and maintains a high level of readiness pursuant to the 2004 NDPG is under way. The MSDF is reorganizing its current force structure of four escort flotillas, each comprising eight destroyers, to a more flexible structure of eight escort divisions, each comprising four destroyers. The ASDF is planning to newly establish an in-flight refueling and transport squadron, among others, that will facilitate proactive implementation of international peace cooperation activities.

Of the three services, it is the GSDF that is planning the most extensive reorganization from the readiness standpoint. At the center of the GSDF's reorganization plan is the newly formed Central Readiness Force (CRF) that will enhance the SDF's ability to deal with emergencies caused by guerrilla or special forces' attack.

The CRF will be organized as headquarters that centrally command new organizations such as a Rapid Reaction Regiment and an International Peace Cooperation Activity Training Unit, in addition to existing mobile operation units (a helicopter brigade and an airborne brigade) and various specialized units (the Special Operation Group and the Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Weapons Protection Unit) that were previously directly controlled by the minister of state for defense. In the event of an emergency occurring within Japan, the CRF will perform the role of force provider and offer its subordinate units to the control of regional armies when necessary. On the other hand, in international peace cooperation activities the CRF headquarters will provide advance parties prior to the dispatch of GSDF contingents and later exercise command and control over these contingents, which will be drawn from regionally deployed armies.

What is important for the SDF's international peace cooperation activities is the creation under the CRF of the International Peace Cooperation Activity Training Unit, which regularly provides instruction and training in various areas to key division- and regiment-level personnel who are engaged in international

peace cooperation activities and assist the training carried out at each unit. It also feeds back lessons learned from SDF international peace cooperation activities to instructors engaged in the training of such units. This helps shorten the period needed to instruct and train contingents dispatched on an overseas mission and improves their readiness for international peace cooperation.

### **(3) Equipment for Multifunctional, Flexible, and Effective SDF**

Apart from a reformed legal system and defense posture, equipment is one of the key elements needed to support effective international peace cooperation activities. For instance, helicopters played a vital role in carrying out relief activities in the countries affected by the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in December 2004 and when Pakistan was hit by the massive earthquake in October 2005. Not many countries were ready or able to send helicopters quickly enough to meet the relief and reconstruction needs that arose in the aftermath of these natural disasters. The CH-47, one of the world's largest transport helicopters, played an important role in carrying out rescue and relief operations in the countries affected by the tsunami, and Japan has about 60 CH-47Js and 'JAs. This number is second only to the United States, which has more than 400 CH-47s, and is larger than those operated by NATO member states such as Britain and Italy. Due in part to the lack of transport capability, Japan did not dispatch CH-47s to Pakistan in October 2005, sending UH-1 multipurpose helicopters instead. However, Japan was among the small group of countries that could send helicopters to Pakistan, including the United States, some NATO countries, and Russia.

After the Indian Ocean tsunami, Japan dispatched the transport ship *Osumi* to carry out disaster relief activities in those countries affected. The *Osumi* is capable of transporting CH-47s that have a large payload-carrying capacity and, under certain circumstances, can land on and take off from the sea. As the *Osumi* can ferry

**A GSDF UH-1 multipurpose helicopter is loaded aboard an ASDF C-130H transport aircraft for airlift to Pakistan.** (Kyodo Photo)

relief goods ashore using LCAC, it played a very important role in providing relief to the people and areas affected by the tsunami. As many of the littoral states in the Asia-Pacific region have long coastlines, equipment that can be sent from an offshore operations base and employed for relief activities will be used effectively in various situations.

Only industrialized nations can afford to acquire and operate advanced equipment such as heavy-lift helicopters and transport ships like the CH-47 and *Osumi*. International peace cooperation carried out using such equipment illustrates the unique quality of Japan's approach, and may serve to point the way for future international peace cooperation planning.

However, one major problem standing in the way of carrying out such disaster relief activity is the limited capacity to transport such equipment and personnel to the scene of a natural disaster. Japan used ASDF C-130Hs and B-747s and chartered An-124s to transport SDF personnel and equipment. However, the C-130Hs dispatched to Pakistan are basically intra-theater transport aircraft and had to stop over four times en route for refueling. As this experience shows, the range and load-carrying capacity of these aircraft are limited. B-747s have sufficient range, but as they are built to carry passengers, they cannot carry equipment as large as that loaded on military transport aircraft. The An-124s, which are owned and operated by a Ukrainian company, may not be available when Japan wants to charter them, so to effectively carry out future international peace cooperation activities, Japan has to introduce new types of transport aircraft that are faster and have longer range.

Under the *Mid-term Defense Program FY2005-2009* formulated in December 2004 (2004 MTDP), Japan plans to procure equipment that can be effectively utilized for cooperation with the international community. Chief among them include 15 CH-47J/JA helicopters (11 for the GSDF and four for the ASDF), one KC-767 in-flight refueling transport aircraft, and eight new-type transport aircraft. However, according to the 2004 MTDP, they are intended to provide against the "new threats and diverse situations" as defined by the 2004 NDPG, particularly, an invasion of offshore islands. When viewed from the standpoint of the Asia-Pacific security environment, which is riddled with uncertain factors, completely shifting the weight of the basic force structure of Japan from one exclusively designed to defend Japan to one focused on international peace cooperation carries considerable risk. In this sense, it is only natural that the equipment Japan

procures should be designed to meet the needs for coping with new threats and diverse situations. Meanwhile, it is also true that ensuring the security of Japan through cooperation with the international community has taken on a growing importance in recent years. Given the concept of defense capabilities based on such key elements as multifunctional, flexible, and effective forces, the types of equipment mentioned earlier will be also used for the purpose of international peace cooperation activities.

#### **4. Future Challenges**

Japan has been making various efforts to strengthen its international peace cooperation activities. On the basis of such experience, Japan needs to make a strategic judgment from the standpoint of the nation's security with regard to such questions as what priority it should give to international cooperation, and how it should undertake international peace cooperation activities. The international cooperation that Japan conducts is not a one-way contribution for the benefit of other countries. Basically, it should be based on a judgment that such activities serve Japan's security interests. Certainly, with the progress of globalization, an incident occurring in a distant area or caused by the unpredictable group could have a serious impact on Japan's security. However, dealing with a clearly discernible existing threat or a highly predictable destabilizing factor in a region surrounding Japan merits high priority from the standpoint of Japan's security.

This is the difference between Japan's security environment and that of European countries that no longer need to worry about a direct threat after the end of the Cold War. European nations can shift a large part of their resources from national defense to overseas activities. In Northeast Asia, the embers of regional destabilizing factors, such as the Korean Peninsula, are still smoldering, so much so that countries in this region, unlike those in Europe, are not in a position to slash the resources devoted to national defense.

As long as direct threats persist within the regional security environment with which countries are concerned, national defense will remain a top priority. Meanwhile, even if a country does not participate in international peace cooperation activities to stabilize the international community, it will not necessarily be invaded by another country. In this sense, no country, basically, has the incentive to give higher priority to international cooperation over its own

national defense. On the other hand, it is also true that, given the increasing trend toward the globalization of security, working for the stability of the international community through international cooperation has led to improving Japan's security environment. From this standpoint, the 2004 NDPG takes seriously the linkage between international peace cooperation and Japan's national interests, and takes a clearly defined position on actively promoting international cooperation. What really matters in this respect is to set out the criteria on the basis of which policymakers will be able to make judgments about the linkage between a given international peace cooperation activity and Japan's national interests. For instance, the government might draw up a document along the lines of *National Security Strategy of the United States* that formalizes principles in advance. Or the government might make a judgment about the linkage between a proposed peace cooperation activity and Japan's national interests each time such a proposal is made. This choice itself merits in-depth discussion. In any event, the accountability of policymakers to clarify that linkage will take on a growing importance.