Introduction

The Council of Defense-Strategic Studies was established within the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) in 1999. I am a founding member of this Council and have been engaged with it ever since.

Among the various background factors leading to its establishment, there was a shared understanding at that time that we should cultivate strategic thinking on issues such as state security and national defense, which we had been avoiding. In Japan, there was reluctance to tackle such issues strategically.

What would have been preferable is to set up a security strategy council at the governmental level. However, that being not easy, the Council of Defense-Strategic Studies, in the form of Track 2 meetings mainly consisting of scholars and specialists from the private sector, was constituted as a part of the research task of the NIDS. In fact it became a Track 1.5 type of forum which involved directors and higher members of the NIDS, senior officials of the JDA/Ministry of Defense in charge of defense policy, high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and at times the participation of the Minister and the Vice-Minister of Defense. Other members consisted of prominent scholars and specialists, whose attendance rate reveals their commitment to the review of fundamental strategic issues for Japan.

During the period when discussions were held from the strategic viewpoint focusing on security and national defense, the annual common agenda themes in the early period were “The Japan-US Alliance,” “The Role of Japan” and “Security Strategy of Japan,” which differ from recent agenda topics such as “The US as the Global Power,” “The Power of China” and “The Reconstruction of Japan.” This change itself is the evidence of the transformation of the security of Japan.

The common agenda for Fiscal Year 2012 was “The International Environment and Japan’s Security in the 2010s—Japan in the Era of Power Shifts.” Incidentally, the year also marked the sixtieth anniversary of NIDS. To commemorate the anniversary it was decided that the discussions of the Council meeting would be collated and published as a book. So far the reports of the Council meetings had summarised the presentations and discussions of meetings over a one-year or two-year period in the style of
minutes, turned them into reports and distributed these to relevant parties. This time we aim to publish it as a book which would be the first full-fledged product by the Council of Defense-Strategic Studies that marks the fourteenth anniversary of its foundation. On this premise, presenters = writers were selected, the discussions for the year was structured beforehand, and presentations, discussions and writing were executed in sequence.

Professor Akio Watanabe, chairman of the Council, who set the common agenda for the fiscal year, exchanged opinions with each presenter (writer) and also led the discussions in the meetings. After the presentations were made at the meetings, each presenter was asked to write about each theme taking into account related discussions.

This book consists of three parts. They are “Power Shifts and How They Affect Japan,” “Power Shifts and East Asia’s Position in the International System” and “The New Security Challenge,” respectively.

In the first section, we had Professor Yoshinobu Yamamoto contribute “The International Political Process of Power Transition and Japan’s Security,” and Professor Hiroshi Nakanishi write about “The Position of Japan in the World of the the 2010s—From the View Point of the Theory of Civilization.”


Under the agenda of “The New Security Challenge,” Professor Yasuaki Hashimoto was asked to write about the “Use of Outer Space for Security Purposes: Its History and Issues for Japan” and Professor Motohiro Tsuchiya about “Cyber Security as a Non-traditional Threat to National Security.” I (Masahiro Akiyama) wrote about “Maritime Security and Japan.” Although there were no presentations on the issues of space and oceans at the meetings, due to the fact that they are security issues that cannot be ignored, it was decided that they would be included in the book.

In the last and concluding chapter, Professor Akio Watanabe, who is the chairman of the panel, wrote a piece titled “Japan’s Security Outlook,” in which he expressed his profound insights on the security of Japan.

In addition to the writers above, we would like to mention that this publication is based on comments and discussion of the Council of Defense-
Strategic Studies. From that perspective, the authors are grateful to the members of the Council: Professor Tetsuya Umemoto, Mr. Yoichi Kato, Mr. Takao Kitahata, Mr. Toshio Shimada, Professor Yoshihide Soeya, Professor Masayuki Tadokoro, Professor Jitsuo Tsuchiyama, Professor Masashi Nishihara, Professor Yuichi Hosoya, Ambassador Yuji Miyamoto, and Ambassador Koji Tsuruoka. Among them, many have made presentations at Council meetings within the last two to three years. Lastly, I would like to comment that this publication is precisely the outcome of the accumulation of knowledge of the Council of Defense-Strategic Studies.

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