

# Text of Report

## Introduction

The Council of Defense-Strategic Studies issued a report in May 2001 that formed the launching point for two years of Council discussion between July 2001 and March 2003 on the Japan-U.S. alliance and Japan's role in the alliance. The global strategic environment changed significantly over this two-year period. Major events that caused this change include the terrorist attacks in the U.S. on September 11, 2001 and the subsequent military action in Afghanistan to eliminate a hotbed for terrorists, followed by diplomatic skirmishes over the run-up to the Iraq war during the latter half of 2002, friction between the U.S. and France, Russia, and Germany, the schism between "Old Europe" and "New Europe," the preemptive strike on Iraq, and the swift conclusion of major combat. The international community now also faces the grave issue of subsequent reconstruction in Iraq.

This series of events clearly demonstrates the realities of today's international political structure, one that can be labeled a U.S. unipolarity. While scholars differ in their views on what this structure means, it is difficult to dispute the fact that the U.S. is the most powerful nation in the world economically and militarily, as well as in terms of soft power. U.S. power is particularly striking in military terms. According to *Military Balance 2002/2003*, the U.S. national defense budget in 2002 stood at US\$396.8 billion, a figure that exceeds the entire national defense budgets of Japan, the U.K., France, Germany, China and Russia combined. Backed by this overwhelming national strength, the U.S. has the power to redefine world security issues. After September 11, the U.S. became deeply concerned about the relationship between the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, redefining it as the most crucial security issue the U.S. and the world faces. Russia, China and other countries jumped on this redefinition of security issues as a means of pursuing their own national interests. The result has been that security issues in their traditional form as rooted in interstate conflicts have faded into the background.

The Council debated the question of how Japan should position itself in the

context of the strategic environment formed by the unipolar structure described above. While the Japan-U.S. alliance is of the greatest importance to Japan's national security, the alliance's specific form should be given careful consideration and be paired with a study of what the implications for alliances are in general under the condition of U.S. preponderance. The Japanese government's stance of supporting the U.S. on the Iraq war from the outset was the appropriate one. This is not due to the fact that the government has, in hindsight, "bet on the winning horse." Japan's support for the U.S. was necessary in light of the considerable risks involved in the problems of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, and the fact that U.S. power is needed in order to meet these risks.

Meanwhile, important domestic legislative measures concerning Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) were enacted during the same two-year period. The Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law and the dispatch of SDF vessels to the Indian Ocean in accordance with this law, as well as the enactment of the Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq and the dispatch of SDF troops to Iraq, are all extremely significant steps that affect the role of Japanese defense capabilities. Moreover, the so-called "contingency-related bills" (the three bills consisting of Japan's wartime legislation spelling out basic responses to actual or anticipated military attacks from outside, the amendment of the Self-Defense Forces Law, and the revision of the Law Governing the Security Council of Japan to create a crisis-response committee) were enacted to address the original role of the Self-Defense Forces. A number of outstanding legislative issues, as well as several issues regarding the building of defense capabilities, however, remain to be resolved. Steps must now be taken to move beyond the research and study of missile defense, for example, and on to the next stage. This series of issues with regard to Japan's SDF must be raised in examining the implications for the Japan-U.S. alliance.

This report, based on the past two years of Council discussion, outlines the future of the Japan-U.S. alliance and the role of Japanese defense forces since the end of the Iraq war.