

2. Japan's Security Strategy

In view of the discussions on the East Asian security environment and the security issues which East Asia faces, what are the points to consider for the future development of Japan's security strategy? First, starting with strategic theory, the following section will provide details on subjects such as what Japan's new security strategy should entail and specific issues for the next outline.

(1) Strategic Theory

Usually, when one speaks of strategic theory, one primarily thinks of war strategy. Strategic theory can be divided into three categories. War strategy or foreign military strategy refers in international politics to deterrence, crisis management and defense, etc. Other types of strategies also exist such as a grand strategy which consists of a long-term strategic theory and national strategy, which consists of diplomatic strategy that includes various aspects such as alliance and reconciliation, in other words, a strategy that does not take military action into consideration.

Factors that come into play when considering a strategy are what constitute a strategy. Initial objectives include basic territorial protection, conservation, expansion, as well as protection of current order or efforts toward restoring order. When considering national power as a major factor, importance must be placed not only on military strength in itself but also economic strength that supports the military strength. Meanwhile, the concept of national power can also be divided into continental and maritime states. If with the end of the Cold War the international environment changes from bipolar confrontation to a structure that is clearly not confrontational, changes in strategy will obviously also ensue. Another perspective is to consider whether the international environment is one where an offensive environment is favorable or one where a defensive environment is favorable. Such perspective is affected by the concepts of what the environment can do and how to perceive the environment. Changes in strategy also occur through technological changes. In particular, a strategy can change depending on whether nuclear weapons exist or not. Furthermore, differences in strategic cultures also lead to different strategies. Calculations become different according to differences in historical backgrounds such as between a conquering and conquered nation or psychological differences such as between a nation that is on the defensive side and one that is on the offensive side.

In Japan's post-war defense policy, emphasis has been on a defensive response. If the basis of a strategy is to decide how to move according to the other player's move, realism consists of offensive realism and defensive realism. Offensive realism refers to the concept where a nation thinks only of its own interests and focuses on ensuring its safety. Meanwhile, defensive realism is not adhered by all states and is a theory in which a state thinks about how the opponent is going to react to its moves and about how, depending on the move, the opponent may become anxious and lose its sense of security. A strategy will greatly differ according to which perspective is chosen.

(2) New Security Strategy

As security threats become more diverse, a new security strategy is needed. However, the process of developing such strategy is still underway and incomplete.

How would form the framework of a new security strategy? First, with international security as the key word, it is the fact that the time has come to seriously consider national security. Secondly, it is to define a framework that is important in the process of determining Japan's security strategy. Although the bilateral alliance with the U.S. being the most important framework cannot be denied, that does not mean the importance of the United Nations has decreased. Furthermore, efforts to complement the United Nations and the Alliance, such as the Coalition of the Willing, the multinational forces and regional frameworks are also important. Thirdly, as Japan has come to hold a major position in the Asia-Pacific region, it must assume an important role to ensure peace and stability in this entire region.

As threats are becoming increasingly diversified, we must anticipate to what extent these threats constitute threats to self-interests and take necessary action. Danger must be promptly sensed, and while picturing what kind of threat to oneself this danger could transform into if left unattended, it is important to share the awareness of this threat and work together to deal with it.

This indicates how the capacity to respond to not only traditional security issues but also nontraditional security issues is equally as important. In addition to the notion of security by country, there is also the situation that unless the entire current international system is preserved, the security of each of the countries could be threatened. When dealing with such a situation, traditional measures alone are not efficient enough, and to take measures in a single country is also not enough.

Although in Japan many people are more conscious about traditional security issues, the U.S., which is our ally and nation leading the current international system, is pouring energy not only into its response to traditional threats by major nations but also to non-traditional threats. This is an aspect that may lead to a perception gap between the two nations when confirming their respective security interests.

(3) Japan's Security Strategy

Japan's security strategy is one that responds passively to specific circumstances, and is not an active strategy in which it reaches out to its surroundings and creates a situation that is favorable for Japan's policy implementation. Why does Japan have weak strategic skills? Following the war, Japan has been bound by a number of restrictions such as Article 9 of the Constitution, which without a doubt have made it difficult for the country to think strategically. This is because although it is relatively easy to speak in terms of defense strategy, when discussing security strategy, it is necessary to think about the use of military force and what must be achieved as a result. Strategy involves thinking about how a nation should or should not use its military force and therefore in post-war Japan there has been a strong tendency to not speak of strategy.

However, Japan no longer lives in a world where when asked in which direction it wishes to move it can answer that it would leave it up to the international situation. Japan's national strategy consists of how, from the perspective of its national interests, it perceives the current international environment and which direction it intends to take. This would involve diplomatic means in addition to military means, but discussions on Japan's military role are important. With regard to the issue of the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, common strategic objectives were determined in the first stages, followed by duties and capabilities, and equipment came last. With regard to this, it can be said that heated discussions were carried out at the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense and that it is similar to the security strategy developed by these two Ministries.

In relation to the national security strategy, discussions from both diplomatic / defense and military perspectives are necessary. Just like there was mention of strategic use of ODA in the 2004 Basic Defense Program, the idea of how to put forth policies that would include not only defense but also diplomatic aspects is important.

What is required in the discussions of the next defense outline? In terms of when the next outline would be ready, that would probably be when we would see a completely new strategic environment coming. More specifically, that would be for example the rise of China or the occurrence of a cultural clash in the Middle East or other regions. Japan would have to develop an outline that includes its response to such circumstances. Points to consider in the process of reviewing the outline include the assessment of threat (risk) factors and response thereto. In terms of threat (risk) factors, new threats become important. With regard to the role of Japan, active discussions on the right of collective self-defense and collective security are necessary. It is also extremely important to hold discussions on Japan's strategy as a state founded on the principles of maritime protection as well as on the protection of its assets from such perspective. Furthermore, discussions are also required on whether the existing exclusively defense-oriented policy and the basic policy will still be valid in the future.

Moreover, a change in the way the outline is developed is also necessary. Unlike the existing method, integrated efforts by the entire government are necessary when developing an outline. Furthermore, the trends toward constitutional revision may coincide with the process of developing the next outline. If changes in the articles or interpretation occur, it will obviously also lead to changes in the defense role. In such case, a major revision would be required. For that reason, there would also have to be major changes in the way the outline is formulated. Due to the possibility of being able to significantly change many of the current restrictions, national debates should be actively conducted.

(4) Specific Issues Surrounding the Next Outline

Discussions on the following issues will be necessary regarding the next outline.

First, a structural change from military units whose role is international contribution to those that can carry out international duties is necessary. In view of the transition from the Defense Agency to the Ministry of Defense whose overseas missions now consist of its primary mission, the Ministry must undertake reforms that entail the fulfillment of obligations, not contribution.

The development of defense capabilities that can accomplish various overseas missions is necessary. More specifically, these consist of a long distance mass transportation system, field monitoring system, large-scale and speedy logistic system, special warfare capability, development of war strength that can respond to combined and joint operations and reform of the operational doctrine, as well as a system of law that clearly specifies the limits of its mission potential abroad.

Secondly, the system must be improved to enhance the credibility of the Japan-U.S. alliance. More specifically, such improved system would entail enhanced cooperation between Japan and the U.S. in the command and control to upgrade missile defense, cooperation to effectively enhance the nuclear capability of the U.S., and a system of law that clearly specifies to what extent the use of the right of collective self-defense is permitted.

Thirdly, a system must be built to increase information war capabilities. More specifically, this system includes increased counter PSYOP capabilities and counter espionage capabilities, the possession of a high-resolution surveillance satellite, and superiority in information security capabilities.

Fourthly, a system must be built for Japan to be unique. Japan relies on the U.S. in all aspects of nuclear deterrence, strategic strike ability and the capability to launch a strike against foreign installations, information necessary for security, fundamental elements of military technology and the protection of energy transport routes. This tendency to follow the U.S. must be reformed. In order to make a Japanese NSC work, a central intelligence organization is essential. A strategy cannot be built unless it is based on information. A transformation of the Japan Self-Defense Forces is necessary where within a given budget, it decides what to prioritize based on which it concentrates its human, material and financial resources.

(5) Comprehensive Security or Integrated Security?

Although there is no doubt military force is an essential means to ensure security, we also no longer live in a time where security policy can be discussed in terms of military force alone. However, the term “comprehensive security” once used by the late Japanese Prime Minister Ohira was a concept that attempted to particularly decrease military power, and that isn’t necessarily right. What is important is that it is necessary to effectively combine the various means of policy implementation Japan can have as a country. The boundary between national defense and public security in international counter-terrorism and response to armed spy ships is said to be vague, while the same thing is being said about the boundary between diplomacy, national defense and public security in its reconstruction assistance to Iraq. The situation calls for an integration of these means of policy implementation.

When considering an integrated security strategy, the following three points are important: (a) the integrity of the purpose and approach; (b) the integrity of the means of policy implementation; and (c) integrity of the decisions. With regard to integrated security, because security, economic opportunities and political reform are interconnected, if even one of these is lacking, the other two cannot be achieved, which is why the integration of security policies is extremely important.

The same is true not only for the defense outline but also for international counter-terrorism, reconstruction assistance to Iraq, and discussions on national emergency legislation. A proper emergency legislation was introduced as a result of having directly dealt with various fundamental issues such as what the decision-making procedures would consist of in the event of an emergency situation, what kind of situation would be dealt with as an emergency situation, and in the case of one, what would the Security Council of Japan actually do, would the Diet be involved or not, how would the roles be shared between the government and local governments, would the citizens simply be the subject of protection or would they play a certain role in an emergency situation, how would the situation be coordinated, and how would the public be protected.

The production of equipment in an emergency situation, in other words, the issue of boosting defense capabilities also calls for consideration. From the perspective of integrated security strategy and measures, this issue does not only concern the Ministry of Defense and the Japan Self-Defense Forces, it is also necessary to determine how to deal with such a situation as a nation. For example, although quantitative reduction of equipment is unavoidable, mechanisms for emergency defense buildup, legal aspects and measures as to what to promote to the defense industry under normal circumstances should be discussed.

From now on, focus should not only be on SDF dispatch and activities in international peace cooperation activities, the agenda must also contain in-depth consideration of political integration including diplomacy.

To effectively use the Japan Self-Defense Forces as a means of policy implementation, a proper regional strategy, that is, a comprehensive strategy is required about what kind of regional order Japan is aiming, what kind of measures should be used and how they should be used to achieve such order. Japan must present to overseas countries such a comprehensive strategy. More specifically, comprehensive discussions are necessary in which issues such as how Japan perceives China's current situation, how Japan should deal with it and what kind of regional order should as a result be built. Furthermore, prompt establishment of the Basic Act on Ocean Policy and Basic Law on Space Activities is necessary and the permanent law on SDF dispatch should also be revised as soon as possible.

To what extent should these comprehensive discussions be held? The Cabinet Secretariat first comes to mind. The functions of the Cabinet Secretariat have become considerably stronger, and the deputy chief cabinet secretary and its people are discussing the various aspects of security measures. Although the Security Council of Japan occupies an important place with the participation of several Ministers such as the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and the Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare and despite the fact that it fulfills its function in terms of crisis management, there still seems to be room for improvement for effective discussions on a security strategy.