

Research on National Security Issues

The global balance of power has changed dramatically, and competition is emerging between nations in politics, economics, military affairs, and other spheres. As challenges to international order based on the rule of law, such as Russia's aggression against Ukraine continue, it is critical for Japan to enhance its cooperation and partnerships with its allies and other like-minded countries with whom Japan shares a universal sense of values and strategic interests. Against this backdrop, the role of NIDS is taking on increasing importance.



At NIDS, civil service researchers with various academic backgrounds and SDF officer-researchers work together to conduct research on various issues concerning Japan's security.



Research Themes

Research activities at NIDS are intended to address the fluid strategic environment that currently surrounds Japan. The following are examples of themes closely related to Japan's national security on which researchers at NIDS focus their efforts.

Global Security Issues

The international security environment is becoming increasingly complex and challenging. This is reflected in the obstruction of free navigation in the oceans, the escalation of threats in the so-called new domains including cyberspace, the oceans, outer space, and the electromagnetic spectrum, and the development of battles in the cognitive spectrum. NIDS conducts research on international and national responses to these global security challenges.

Research on the Development, Operation, and Institutions of Defense Capability

NIDS conducts research and studies on defense strategy, alliance cooperation, defense industry, deterrence, security legislation, national defense organization, political-military relations, and the human infrastructure of the defense force.

Regional Security Relations

NIDS conducts unique analyses of the strategic environment surrounding the Indo-Pacific countries that are Japan's key security partners, and the situations in countries and regions that have significant influence on Japan's security. We undertake analyses from comprehensive perspectives encompassing diplomacy, the economy, domestic policy, and the military. Our scope extends from the United States, China, the Korean Peninsula, Russia, Southeast Asia, Australia, and South Asia, to the Middle East, Europe, and Africa.

Policy Simulation

Policy simulation is a means of examining actual policy issues by creating hypothetical scenarios and discussing how the country in question should act and how other concerned countries would react in the scenario. Policy simulation has developed significantly, particularly in the United States, and is widely incorporated into making strategies/policies by national defense and diplomatic authorities.

NIDS appointed the Director, Policy Simulation and established the Policy Simulation Division, to make use of NIDS' advanced expert knowledge and research capabilities to plan and implement policy simulations, which involve creating scenarios, facilitating debates among participants, and creating reports. In addition, NIDS works with overseas research institutions to conduct joint research, and to acquire/research state-of-the-art techniques.



Simulation exhibition at the *Connections Japan* conference



Utilization of simulations in policy support

Research on Military History

NIDS' Center for Military History is Japan's largest military history research institution. It conducts research on the military history of Japan and other countries in order to respond to the requirements of defense policy makers as well as to support the educational and training needs of the SDF.

The study of military history is especially indispensable for providing the foundation for examining the nation's current and future security environments and issues. In addition, nations can enhance the maintenance and facilitation of their current relationships by exchanging ideas concerning their historical perceptions of their relationship in the past. Because research on various countries' historical perceptions is thus a key subject of research at NIDS, it now strives to expand the breadth of its research by taking a multi-perspective approach in its historical studies, uninhibited by narrow frameworks such as "Japanese military history" or "foreign military history."



Presentations at research meetings



Research exchanges with overseas research institutions

Research Themes

In order to continuously reexamine the factual aspects of military history as well as to support Japan's current national security policymaking by providing historical perspectives, NIDS is focusing its research efforts on the following themes

Research on World War II Military History

By making use of newly released archival material and recent research results, and by incorporating the viewpoints of other countries, NIDS continues to study the military history of World War II.

Research on the history of Japan's post-World War Two national security policy

NIDS conducts research studies on national security policy in post-war Japan, including the establishment and growth of the SDF, which has now entered the realm of history. NIDS also compiles oral histories of the postwar period.

Research on History of International Conflict

NIDS studies international conflicts that have occurred throughout history to provide historical lessons which can contribute to national security policymaking and education and training within the SDF.

Compilation of Military and Military History Research Materials

Publication of Senshi Soshō (War History Series)

Senshi Soshō, a compilation of the Japan's military history in World War Two, encompasses a total of 102 volumes published between 1966 and 1980 by the Office of War Study, the predecessor to the Center for Military History. Its purpose was to aid education and research in the SDF. This collection is available for viewing on the NIDS website.

Applying the Lessons Learned from the Past to the Present



War History Series

Compilation of Oral Histories



NIDS has been compiling and publishing oral histories regarding Japan's postwar national security policies by interviewing persons who directly participated in the making and execution of those policies, and transcribing them as records of the recent past.

Compilation of the History of International Conflicts



NIDS has published "History of the Falklands War" and "History of the Gulf War," each of which has utilized the results of its research on international conflicts.

Research and collection of military history-related archival materials located overseas

In addition to verifying already known historical facts, it is necessary to continuously search for new or previously unknown historical facts. In particular, NIDS constantly makes efforts to unearth new historical information by studying and collecting documents archived overseas which were not previously accessible and which are often released to the public after a certain number of years.