

Chapter 3

Significance and Roles of Japan's Ground Forces: Throughout the Pre- and Post-World War Two (during and after the Cold War) Eras

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Introduction

As long as humankind makes land its basic domain for survival, ground forces will be a closer presence to human beings than maritime and air forces. Ground forces are also closely related to politics, and is the military capability that most closely reflects society. It is the ultimate assurance for defending a country's territory and citizens against acts of aggression by other countries, and even if the country's military strength were modest, the presence of ground forces would be sufficient to demonstrate its national sovereignty. Therefore, there are probably no countries in the world that would disregard ground forces unless they are blessed with an extremely favorable security environment. Furthermore, unlike maritime and air combat, decisions to launch ground combat require much prudence and care for reasons such as the impact ground combat can have on citizens' lives, the complexity of dealing with the postwar situation, and the response of the international community.

However, while ground forces have such important significance and roles, the reality is that for some reason, in comparison with sea power and air power, little research has been conducted on land power with ground forces as its core. This may seem strange, but there are two main possible reasons. Firstly, while sea and air power are used on a global scale and in theaters of war that span a wide area, a ground force that has limited projection capability acts mostly in small and restricted theaters of war and battlefields. For this reason, research has largely been confined to studies on military operations and tactics. Secondly, politics on the European continent itself, which had been centered on international politics, had probably been equated to research on land power. This is because in continental countries with borders that are connected on land, the armies had been the forces that played a leading role in ensuring the country's survival as well as developing a balance of power. Be it Germany or Russia, securing safety is the most important issue for continental countries with few natural barriers or buffer zones at their borders, and the army had been tasked with the job of defending the national border. Accordingly, the scale of the armies was large, and they played an important role. Realism, which raises questions about the survival of a country,

is a theory that was produced and supported within such continental environments; in particular, discussions on the theory of balance of power were centered on the geographical characteristics of the European continent and the power of armies. Christopher Layne pointed out that there were no impregnable geographical barriers to prevent invasion on the European continent, so the countries on the continent had been exposed to the risk of being conquered by other countries. He also suggested that it was easier to develop a balance of power systems to prepare for invasions on continents, where ground military capabilities are easier to use.¹ According to Randall L. Schweller, balancing is the formation of an alliance and the creation and aggregation of military force, aimed at deterrence and defense against territorial occupation as well as political and military control by other countries, and ground military capability is a core element in the balance of power.² In other words, land power is a universal and familiar presence, and has been excessively accepted by people as a common and obvious military power. This is probably why, conversely, ground military capability has not been able to demonstrate its singularity.

On the other hand, commercial activities such as trade and finance have developed in island states and maritime countries, and such countries have prioritized activities that pursued prosperity over survival in the form of defending the national borders. Moreover, if people were allowed to trade freely, it would not be necessary to acquire the territory;³ instead, territorial expansion could generate energy loss. Consequently, maritime countries placed value on the institutionalization of freedom of navigation as a rule, rather than on realism, resulting in the evolution of liberalism that we have today as well as the relatively small role⁴ that ground forces play in such countries.

The roles of ground forces are also limited for island states and maritime countries

¹ Christopher Layne, *Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs), Cornell University Press, 2007, p. 20.

² Randall L. Schweller, "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Under Balancing," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 2, Fall 2004, p. 166; John A. Vasquez and Colin Eelman, *Realism and the Balancing of Power: A New Debate*, Pearson, 2002, p. 8.

³ Somura Yasunobu, *Chiseigaku Nyumon* [Introduction to Geopolitics], Chuko Shinsho, 1984; Somura Yasunobu, *Umi no Seijigaku* [Politics of the Sea], Chuko Shinsho, 1988. Richard Rosecrance stated that if a country attempts to gain interest in another country, it will have to make the choice of doing so through forced or military territorial control, or by economic exchanges through trade (Richard Rosecrance, Tsuchiya Masao (trans.), *Shin Boeki Kokka Ron* [*The Rise of the Trading State*], Chuo Koronsha, 1987, pp. 26, 33, 43).

⁴ James Kurth pointed out that realism, which includes the theory of the balance of power that bears in mind military diplomacy of the continent, is applicable to the diplomacy of continental countries such as Germany but not suitable for maritime countries such as the United States (James Kurth, "Inside the Cave: The Banality of I. R. Studies," *The National Interest*, No. 53, Fall 1998, p. 30).

from the viewpoint of military operations. Island states are surrounded by sea, and there is little likelihood that they would be subjected to invasions by land. On the other hand, due to the concentration of major ports and cities on their coastal areas, they are vulnerable to attacks by landing assault as well as air and missile attacks, and are therefore not suited to national defense operations that center on land battles. If they are robbed of their naval supremacy and their sea lanes are intercepted by the enemy country, it would become impossible for them to replenish their supplies and they would lose their ability to continue fighting the battle. Furthermore, if their terrain is invaded by land, it would be difficult for them to escape to a third country, so the majority of the citizens would either have to remain and fight or surrender to the enemy. Hence, the defense of island states is focused on strengthening the maritime and air forces, and vanquishing the enemy's invading troops on sea while avoiding any battles on land. For this reason, the role of ground forces for island states is generally limited to coastal defense, or defending the gateposts of the sea channels in order to secure safe maritime transportation.

In general, it is easier for island states that are surrounded by the sea on all sides to place priority on maritime and air power than on ground forces with regard to the composition of their military force, as compared to continental countries and peninsular countries with national borders that are connected on the land. However, Japan was an exception. This is because Japan had been an island state before the war, at least in the geographical aspect, and it was a rare country that made the choice of being an occupying country despite its small size. Therefore, the nature of its defense force changed from that of an island state to that of a continental country, and ground forces accordingly took on greater significance and roles for Japan. It is interesting to note that even after withdrawing from the continents and establishing itself as a maritime trading country postwar, ground forces became the key element in Japan's defense force. Why was that so?

To state the conclusion beforehand, the peculiarity of the significance and roles of Japan's ground forces lies in its geographical character. Despite being an island state, Japan is situated near the eastern edge of the Eurasian continent, and while it is not safe enough to avoid being invaded from the continent, it is situated at a distance that makes it relatively easy to embark on foreign expeditions onto the continent. This forms the premise for Japan's strategic value and the growing significance and roles of its ground forces even in the present day, when it has established a security system with the Japan-US Alliance at its core.

1. Significance and Roles of Japan's Ground Forces before the War

The new Meiji government faced the major challenges of achieving national prosperity and strengthening national defense based on the national policy of opening up the country, as well as the revision of unequal treaties. To realize the revision of the treaties, Japan had to consolidate its position as a member of the modern European international system, and the army played a central role in displaying Japan's national strength that was on par with that of the Western European powers.⁵ In the area of national defense, although Japan faced the pressing issue of first developing a naval force for the purpose of coastal defense, it decided to prioritize the development of the army, which was cheap and did not require such advanced technology as a naval force would. The army not only fulfilled the functions of controlling domestic security and ensuring the safe transition from the Tokugawa shogunate system to a centralized government system, but also played a role as a "school" for fostering decorum, patriotism and refinement among the people. The expectations that the Japanese society had of the army differed significantly from that of the United Kingdom and the prewar United States, where there was a sense of aversion and caution towards a standing army that symbolizes central powers, and where great effort had been put into suppressing the significance, roles and scale of the army.

The Satsuma Rebellion was the last civil war in the country, after which Japan no longer had to worry about dealing with civil wars. The primary significance and role of ground forces in Japan at this time was consistently to protect the safety and survival of the country from external threats, especially the threat of Russia. As Japan is an island state situated geographically near the eastern edge of the Eurasian continent, after the end of the Tokugawa shogunate era, it necessarily began to engage diplomatically and strategically with the United Kingdom, located at the western end of the Eurasian continent and confronting Russia in the Great Game, as well as other countries of Europe that aimed to colonize Asia. However, unlike the European continent where the balance of power was at play, Japan basically had to deal with threats from the European powers, including Russia, on its own. While there was undoubtedly great significance in Japan and the United Kingdom working together to restrain Russia based on the Japan-UK Alliance concluded in 1902, neither deployment of the British Army to the front in the Far East nor reinforcement of the ground forces of the allies of the United Kingdom to

⁵ Muranaka Tomoyuki, "Miura Goro 'Heibi Ron' Kosatsu: Kokubo Senryaku toiu Kanten kara no 'Gokyogun' Gainen no Bunseki" [A Study of Miura Goro's "Theory of Armaments": An Analysis of 'Home Protection Army' from the Perspective of National Defense Strategy], *Kokusai Joho Kenkyu* [International Information Research], Vol. 9, No. 1, 2012, p. 55.

the Far East could be expected. The trilateral alliance between Japan, Germany, and Italy established about 40 years later in 1940 was also a mostly “empty alliance” that failed to function as an alliance.⁶

British academic Halford J. Mackinder explained that an island state in confrontation with a continental country should not allow the peninsula situated between the two to be controlled by the continental country.⁷ In the same way, the Japanese people were well aware that Manchuria and the Korean Peninsula were regions that had a life-and-death impact on Japan's security, and if they were to be dominated by Russia, it would endanger Japan's survival. Japan, which considered the independence of the Korean Peninsula and maintaining its neutrality as matters of top priority, eventually had to face both the Sino-Japanese war and the Russo-Japanese war. The Japanese army became an “expeditionary army,” and expanded its organization and power in that process.

However, the growing significance and roles of Japan's ground forces were impacted by Japan's geographical location, which is not at a distance that allows the Tsushima Strait and the Sea of Japan to act as a defensive barrier in preventing invasions from the continent, and conversely, not too far away for advancing into the Korean Peninsula and the continent. In short, for Japan, an island state with limited land and shallow depth of defense, the ease of crossing the sea made it impossible for it to counter the Russian threat through a strategy based on coastal defense. In light of that, an active defense strategy that established the “line of interest” on the Korean Peninsula, which was closely related to the security of the “line of sovereignty,” was necessary in order to protect this “line of sovereignty” that marked the line of defense for Japan's territory.⁸ Not only did the setting of the “line of interest” contain the threat on distant continents, it also contributed to securing Japan's command of the sea in the Tsushima Strait. The Sino-Japanese war had initially been planned as an “absolute war” for the complete defeat of the enemy, but in reality, it was fought as a “limited war on the sea,” and the status of the control of the sea had significant influence on the progress of the war. Similarly, for the Russo-Japanese

⁶ See Johanna Menzel Meskill, *Hitler & Japan: Hollow Alliance*, New York: Atherton Press, 1966; Tsuchiyama Jitsuo, “Nichibei Domei ni Okeru ‘Chusei to Hangyaku’: Nihon no Sokoku to Anzen Hoshō no Jirenma” [Loyalty and Treason in the Japan-US Alliance: Japan's Conflict and Security Dilemma], *Kokusai Mondai* [International Affairs], September 2015, pp. 5-15.

⁷ Halford Mackinder, Somura Yasunobu (trans.), *Makkinda no Chiseigaku: Demokurashi no Riso to Genjitsu* [Mackinder's Geopolitics: Democratic Ideals and Reality], Harashobo, 2008, pp. 38-86.

⁸ With regard to the line of interest, see Muranaka Tomoyuki, “Yamagata Aritomo no ‘Riekisen’ Gainen: Sono Gensen to Hitsuzensei” [Yamagata Aritomo's Concept of Line of Interest: Its Source and Necessity], *Gunji Shigaku* [Journal of Military History], Vol. 42, No. 1, June 2006.

war, Corbett argues that it was also a typical “limited war on the sea” in which the army of the island country crossed the sea to secure a limited target.⁹

Of course, although the army shouldered the role of building a bridgehead as the line of interest, that was because the continent had been at a distance that did not require much effort to move to, and was a decisive factor in enabling the Japanese army to become an expeditionary force. If Japan had been separated from the Eurasian continent like Australia and New Zealand, it would not have been able to place its defense line on the continent nor employ foreign expedition as a means, and the roles and scale of the Japanese army would definitely have been as limited as that of other island states.

The nature of the second Japan-UK Alliance concluded in August 1905 after the Russo-Japanese war changed from that of a “defense alliance” to an “offense alliance.” The military roles of the Japanese army evolved to encompass the containment of the Russian army in the Far East, in response to British military action at the Indian border. According to “the 1906 Outline for the Formulation of Operation Plans for the Imperial Army,” which was presented to the throne and approved in February 1906, the operation plans for the Imperial army would be characterized by the taking of the offensive. It also stated clearly that the basic policy for armament had changed from expedition for self-defense, to active invasion.¹⁰

The role of the Korean Peninsula also changed to that of a ground base for making diplomatic and military offensive, due to its value as a line of interest for securing Japan’s safety. Later, when Japan established Manchukuo and consolidated its presence there, the Korean Peninsula served the role of a strategic passageway into Manchuria, and as a supply base for the frontline.¹¹ A sense of Japan’s national power and demands for an expansion of various interests were gradually incorporated into the expansion to the continent, which was aimed initially at securing the survival of the country. In other words, it became impossible for Japan to reflect on the roots of the significance of securing a line of interest for protecting the line of sovereignty; instead, it began to seek a

⁹ Hirano Ryuji, “Kaiyo Gentei Senso toshite no Nisshin Senso: Korubetto no Kaiyo Senryaku no Shiten kara” [The Russo-Japanese War as a limited War on the Sea: From the Perspective of Corbett’s Maritime Strategy], *Gunji Shigaku* [Journal of Military History], Vol. 44, No. 4, March 2009, p. 98; Julian S. Corbett, *Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905*, 2 vols., London: Intelligence Division of Admiralty War Staff, 1914, confidential publications; reprint, Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press; Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1994.

¹⁰ Oe Shinobu, *Nippon no Sanbo Honbu* [Japan’s General Staff Headquarters], Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2018, p. 121.

¹¹ Tsukamoto Katsuichi, *Chosen Hanto to Nippon no Anzen Hosho* [The Korean Peninsula and Japan’s Security], Asagumo Shinsho, 1978, p. 27.

line of interest for protecting the line of interest, expanding the buffer zone even further into the depths of the continent. Through this process, the army of the island state truly made the transformation into an army of a continental country.

World War I was an all-out war that depleted a vast amount of human and material resources. The drawn-out war of attrition made it impossible to determine victory and defeat based solely on the concept of a short-term decisive battle and military strength for it, and rendered it necessary to employ a system of total war. Japan, a country lacking in resources, began to turn its sights overseas as Germany did, in order to find means of equipping itself for an all-out war in the future. Further expectations were placed on the army as a force for making this outward expansion possible.

When a country that is geographically separated from threats places the priority on securing its safety, it is easy for its external stance to become one that is peaceful and harmonious. However, if it is in pursuit of absolute safety, it will strengthen the power of its army that will allow it to control people and territories, as well as approach target countries while strengthening its influence. However, this raises the possibility of a security dilemma with the target countries and creates a spiral that eventually leads to war. Japan in the 1930s fell precisely into this vicious cycle.

By building Manchukuo, Japan placed itself in direct confrontation with both the Soviet Union and China, and therefore had to guard itself on the long border connecting the two countries. The challenge that Japan faced in consolidating and strengthening its interests in Manchuria was that of expanding its power to mainland China. As a result, not only did it become the source that triggered the Sino-Japanese war, it also caused border disputes with Russia such as the Battle of Lake Khasan (1938) and the Battle of Khalkhin Gol (1939), and incited the Soviet Union to strengthen its military capabilities in the Far East. Applying the offense-defense balancing theory, by boldly venturing into the continent, Japan put away the advantageous defense condition of being an island state and made it an advantage in taking the offensive.

Following that, as Japan's relationship with maritime countries deteriorated, in particular with the United Kingdom and the United States, it now became necessary for it to secure defense depth based on the use of territories on the continent as well as strategic resources, including those in the south. The responsibility of fulfilling these needs fell to the army in its role as an expeditionary force. Expeditions to the continent and the south meant that the expansion of the ground military capability could no longer be stemmed. The mass mobilization of military officers and soldiers led to a decline in the quality of the troops, and ultimately became one of the factors contributing to Japan's

defeat in the Great East Asia War.

Summing up Japan's prewar ground forces, due to Japan's geographical conditions as well as national aspirations and policies, its ground forces began to take on the significance, roles, and scale similar to that of a continental country, and unlike the armies of typical island states and maritime countries. While Japan's defense forces adopted an active defense policy toward Japan's neighbors in pursuit of greater security, they ended up defending geographical domains that were not in line with its national strength through a continental policy based on an offensive strategy and its expansion into the south. Ultimately, this led to Japan overstretching itself and making it impossible even for it to defend itself. The essence of that lay in its ground forces that comprised mainly of an "expeditionary force," which acted mainly outside of Japan instead of domestically. Of course, the factors that led to this result were that despite being an island state separated from the continent, Japan was not at a completely safe distance away from the continent to prevent invasions, but conversely at a distance that allowed it to deploy military forces to the continent relatively easily, due to its location near to the Eurasian continent, and the fact that it had been a diplomatically isolated island state. This geographical characteristic did not give the navy and army any relative merits above one another but became a factor that gave rise to a persistent feud between the two, and split Japan's national policy down the middle. The army did not have the power to engage in a full-scale war against the United States, while the navy was not prepared to engage in a full-scale war against Russia. Together, they could only be a defective armament that was a waste of the national defense resources.¹²

2. Significance and Roles of Ground Forces after the War

(1) *The Cold War Era*

As the balance of power had not developed in East Asia before the war, Japan had to have a military land power that was on par with that of a continental country, and confront Russia and the European powers on its own strength. However, postwar Japan was included in the development of the balance of power in Asia as a member of the West, and moreover, contributed to the balance not only in the military aspect, but mainly through its economic prowess. Although the threat from the Soviet Union was not completely eliminated even after the war, in reality, there was a nuclear standoff in addition to an ideological battle between the Eastern and the Western Blocks, particularly

¹² Oe, *Nippon no Sanbo Honbu* [Japan's General Staff Headquarters], p. 128.

revolving around the United States and the Soviet Union. The Korean Peninsula was split into South and North Korea; North Korea became a buffer state, while the US Forces garrisoned South Korea. After the war, Japan's ground forces were based on an exclusively defense-oriented national security policy; until most recently, the Self-Defense Forces had been placed under restrictions with regard to its overseas operations. Consequently, the significance and roles of Japan's ground forces should have become considerably smaller in comparison with what it was before the war. However, even under such postwar conditions, Japan's ground forces remained the key military force it used to be before the war. At its peak, the strength of the ground forces reached approximately 180,000 personnel. Why was that so?

In reality, Japan's geographical characteristic as an island state situated near the eastern edge of the Eurasian continent continued to have a great influence on the significance and roles of the ground forces even after the war. In the postwar period, the first issue that the United States had to tackle in terms of its military strategy was to set up overseas bases for US Forces in its ally and friendly countries on the Eurasian continent and its periphery, and to deploy the US Forces forward. This was based on the same principle as Japan's prewar strategy for national defense, which was to pursue a line of defense on the continent.

Japan, situated at a pivotal location on the eastern edge of the Eurasian continent, also controlled the entrances and exits to the Sea of Japan, the East China Sea, the Yellow Sea, and the Sea of Okhotsk, making it an important part of the United States' offshore island chain in Asia. By gaining control over these regions and waters without allowing the Soviet Union to use them freely, the United States was able to contain land power from the continent, as well as make use of the Pacific's depth of defense for the defense of its own territories.¹³ According to Douglas MacArthur, the Californian coast was already no longer a part of the United States' line of defense. He emphasized, instead, that the outposts in the south were the Philippines, Australia, and the accompanying islands under the control of the United Kingdom and Netherlands (Indonesia), while the outpost in the north was Japan.¹⁴ To be precise, Japan was a strategic outpost of the United States,

¹³ Sakaguchi Daisaku, "'Warera ga Umi (Mare Nostrum)' to Rikuchi no Eikyoryoku: 'Hirakareta Umi' to 'Tozasareta Umi'" ["Our Sea (Mare Nostrum)" and the Influence of Land: The "Open Sea" and the "Closed Sea"], *Kokusai Anzenhosho* [Journal of International Security], Vol. 46, No. 2, September 2018, pp. 88-106.

¹⁴ "Makkasa Intabyu" [MacArthur's Interviews] (March 3, 1949) in Otake Hideo (ed.), *Sengo Nippon Boei Mondai Shiriyoshu* [Collection of Materials on Japan's Postwar Defense Issues], Vol. 1, San-ichi Shobo, 1991, pp. 226-227; Sakamoto Kazuya, *Nichibei Anpo no Kizuna* [Japan-US Security Ties], Yuhikaku, 2000, p. 9.

and at the same time, was accorded the strategic value of being a dedicated relay station and supplies base used by the US Forces for its defense of the Korean Peninsula.

Soon after the war, the United States had been wary of the spread of the Soviet Union's communism in Japan, but the intensification of the Cold War raised concerns about military invasions into the countries of the West, including Japan. However, MacArthur advocated that Japan took on the role of "Switzerland of the Far East," and provisions on the renunciation of war, non-use of military force, and non-possession of military power were set out in the Constitution of Japan.¹⁵ On the other hand, as the confrontation between the United States and Russia became increasingly severe, the US government decided to change its policy with regard to Japan. Furthermore, alongside with the deterioration of the Cold War situation, Japan became positioned as an important base in East Asia for the containment of Russia. The United States had initially thought that the US navy and air force were adequate for the defense of the Far East, but as far as ground defense capability was concerned, it did not deploy any combat units from the army to Japan, but instead attempted to provide cover for this through the rearmament of Japan.

The United States had considered that Japan's ground forces were sufficient without the deployment of its own army. This was because while the threat of a military invasion was present, Europe would come to the front if a conventional war were to break out while the Cold War was ongoing between the United States and Soviet Union. Furthermore, although the Korean Peninsula was split along the 38th parallel with the two Koreas in confrontation with one another, the United States assessed that as no more than a localized standoff. To a certain degree, the United States assumed that there would be a land invasion by the Soviet Union in Hokkaido, but even if that were to occur, it felt that it would be able to deal with the invasion by rushing in from domains outside of Japan. Japan was a safe and optimal choice as a supply base for providing continuous and safe supplies to the US Forces that were deployed on the continent and nearby.¹⁶ However,

¹⁵ "Makkasa Intabyu" [MacArthur's Interviews] (March 3, 1949) in Otake (ed.), *Sengo Nippon Boei Mondai Shiriyoshu* [Collection of Materials on Japan's Postwar Defense Issues], Vol. 1, pp. 226-227; *Asahi Shinbun*, March 3, 1949; Yomiuri Shinbun Sengoshi-han (ed.), *Showa Sengoshi, "Saigunbi" no Kiseki* [Showa Postwar History, The Trajectory of Rearmament], Yomiuri Shinbunsha, 1981, pp. 258-261.

¹⁶ NSC6008/1, Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs to Secretary of State Herter, "United States Policy Toward Japan," May 27, 1960, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960*, Vol. 18: *Japan, Korea*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1994, pp. 312-314, and comments by Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Frank C. Nash in Otake Hideo [ed.], *Sengo Nippon Boei Mondai Shiriyoshu* [Collection of Materials on Japan's Postwar Defense Issues], Vol. 3, San-ichi Shobo, 1993, p. 372.

there was no need to deploy a main combat force to Japan. Japan became a bulwark against communism, and only had to support the US in terms of distance as a relay station that enabled the US Forces to cross the Pacific safely.

Although Japan hoped for the repatriation of the US Army as soon as possible,¹⁷ there were also other reasons why the United States placed its expectations on Japan's ground forces rather than on its own army. The United States was experiencing financial difficulties, so reducing the burden on the army served the New Look Policy well, and also enabled the diversion of the US Forces in Japan to cover the shortfall in ground forces in Europe and the Middle East. A vast quantity of military logistics was necessary to defend Japan against an invasion by the Soviet Union, which may or may not happen, and deploying an army which could only move slowly required a high cost relative to the lack of versatility.¹⁸ In the sense that the safety of the Far East is maintained through cooperation between Japan and the United States, although the United States had absolute superiority across all ground, maritime and air forces, the ground forces were relatively superior over the maritime and air forces within Japan's Self-Defense Forces. Hence, the law of comparative advantage could be applied, and it was possible to create an efficient structure of military power.¹⁹ At a meeting of the US House of Representatives Committee held in June 1953, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Frank C. Nash stated that if assistance were provided to Japan based on the Mutual Security Act (MSA), it would ultimately mean cost savings for the United States, and that assistance based on the MSA would be five to ten times more economical than the continued stationing of the US Army in Japan.²⁰ Hence, Japan's possession of ground forces spared the United States from significant economic losses.

Furthermore, the US Army, which was developed as an organization primarily for the purpose of engaging in battles in Europe, was not suited to action in Japan with its

¹⁷ C.O.E. Oraru Seisaku Kenkyu Purojekuto [C.O.E. Project for Oral History and Policy Enrichment], *Kaiharu Osamu Oraru Hisutori* [Osamu Kaihara's Oral History], 7th Session, Seisaku Kenkyu Daigakuin Daigaku [National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies], April 9, 1999, pp. 242, 253.

¹⁸ "Makkasa Intabyu" [MacArthur's Interviews] (March 3, 1949) in Otake (ed.), *Sengo Nippon Boei Mondai Shiryoshu* [Collection of Materials on Japan's Postwar Defense Issues], Vol. 1, pp. 226-227.

¹⁹ See Sakaguchi Daisaku, "Hikaku Yuiro" to Domei no Shinka: Nichibeikan ni okeru Yakuwari Buntan to Senryoku Kosei no Saitekika" ["Theory of Comparative Advantage" and Deepening of Alliance: The Division of Roles and Optimization of the Composition of Military Force Structure Between Japan and the US], *Rikusen Kenkyu* [Land Warfare Research], January 2011, pp. 23-46.

²⁰ "Beikain MSA Chomonkai Shogen 'Tainichi MSA Enjo ni tsuite'" [US House of Representatives MSA Hearing Testimony "About MSA Assistance to Japan"] (June 16, 1953) in Otake (ed.), *Sengo Nippon Boei Mondai Shiryoshu* [Collection of Materials on Japan's Postwar Defense Issues], Vol. 3, p. 354.

topography of numerous mountains and valleys as well as open fields that cover only small areas.²¹ Most importantly, the expected target for rearmament had been limited to the ground forces because the United States did not want Japan to rearm and deploy the maritime and air forces with overseas invasion capabilities.²²

The presence of Japan's own ground forces instead of the US Army also contributed to easing the security dilemma. Compared to the maritime and air forces, a ground force functions as a symbol of the country's sovereignty. As such, its overseas deployment inevitably becomes a sensitive matter for the neighboring countries, and easily creates tension. However, if a ground force of an ally that neighbors an enemy country were to take over from the US Army, it should alleviate direct confrontation between major powers to a certain degree. In particular, a ground force such as Japan's, which had no expeditionary capability, would not cause any worries of invasion for enemy countries of the United States such as the Soviet Union and China, and could be expected to ease the security dilemma between the United States and its enemy countries.²³

Moreover, the elimination of the need to hold a large number of personnel and supplies as well as to deploy ground forces, which require time to prepare for the deployment of troops, means that even if circumstances resulting in the abandonment of Japan were to occur, it would be easy to withdraw from Japan and there would be greater flexibility for action. Even if the US Army were to withdraw from Japan, as long as Japan had its ground forces, there would not be a power vacuum and it would not be easy for

²¹ MacArthur captured Japan's geography as being strategically difficult to protect and difficult to attack. There are many mountains and valleys in Japan, and troops are limited to moving by rail. Moreover, in consideration of the large number of tunnels and bridges that makes it difficult to deploy divisions quickly, he believed that unarmed neutrality was a rational option ("Memo to General Eichelberger," March 11, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948*, Vol. 6: *The Far East and Australasia*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1978, p. 709; Shibayama Futoshi, *Nippon Saigunbi e no Michi, 1945-1954* [Road to Japan's Rearmament, 1945-1954], Kokusai Seiji, Nippon Gaiko Soshō [11] [Series on International Politics and Japanese Diplomacy, No. 11], Mineruva Shobo, 2010, p. 52). See also Frank Kowalski, Katsuyama Kinjiro (trans.), *Nippon Saigunbi: Beigunji Komondan Bakuryocho no Kiroku* [An Inoffensive Rearmament: The Making of the Postwar Japanese Army], Saimaru Shuppankai, 1984, pp. 20-21.

²² In NSC49, Note by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council, June 15, 1949, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949*, Vol.7: *The Far East and Australasia*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1974, pp. 773-777, Japan's ability to engage in combat was highly appraised. On August 29, 1945, the US Government announced its first postwar Japanese policy, and presented a clear policy that Japan should not possess an army, a navy, an air force, a secret police organization or a civilian aviation (Kowalski, *Nippon Saigunbi* [An Inoffensive Rearmament], p. 39).

²³ Regarding application of the offense-defense balance theory, see Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 1978, pp. 167-174.

a third country to invade. Thereby, even if Japan's relationship with a third country were to become hostile, the US would be able to look at the global situation and decide which country it would support. However, if the US Army were stationed in Japan, it would have to maintain its relationship with Japan to a certain degree regardless of the situation, and it would be difficult to destroy its partnership with Japan and leave it in the lurch.²⁴ The reasons behind the expectations placed by the United States on Japan's ground forces as the replacement for its own army are surmised as described above. However, the eventual result was that Japan boldly developed large-scale ground forces that were more prominent than its maritime and air forces.

With the hasty deployment of the US Army to the Korean Peninsula, Japan's rearmament was embarked on unilaterally based on the conception by the US Forces, and without any time to spare. Moreover, the plan proceeded in secret to avoid opposition from other allies,²⁵ and was realized upon a foundation with weak legal and political grounds.²⁶ The General Headquarters, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (GHQ), which could not reveal any information about Japan's rearmament, positioned the ground forces as the Police Reserve Force, using such ambiguous language to hide its military significance. This became a source of future trouble for the Ground Self-Defense Force in various ways after the war. Thereafter, the ground forces, which were reorganized as the National Safety Force, followed by the Ground Self-Defense Force, was instructed or supervised, and developed, by the US Military Advisory Group (MAG) in all aspects including organization, training, armament, and control, mostly without acceding to Japan's intentions.²⁷ The Government of Japan had no autonomy whatsoever in this rearmament, which proceeded as the United States dictated without giving consideration to Japan's own defense initiative or strategy.

As the Korean War intensified, the United States requested for ground forces of

²⁴ See Sakaguchi Daisaku, "Zaigai Beigun Kichi to 'Shakuchi' no Kachi: Beikoku wa naze, Kichi wo Eru tame ni Ryodo wo Shihai shinakatta no ka" [The Value of US Army Bases Overseas and "Leased Land": Why Did the US Not Control Territories in Order to Acquire Bases?], *Kokusai Anzenhosho* [Journal of International Security], Vol. 42, No. 3, December 2014, pp. 1-15.

²⁵ Otake Hideo, *Saigunbi to Nashonarizumu: Sengo Nippon no Boeikan* [Rearmament and Nationalism: Postwar Japan's Defense Perspective], Kodansha Gakujutsu Bunko, 2005, p. 31.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁷ Masuda Hiroshi, *Jieitai no Tanjo: Nippon Saigunbi to Amerika* [The Birth of the Self-Defense Forces: Japan's Rearmament and the US], Chuko Shinsho, 2004, p. 12.

about 320,000 to 350,000 personnel from Japan.²⁸ Nash offers a hint for understanding the basis for this figure, as follows:

The Soviet Union targets Japan as the most important prize as a base for controlling the Far East, due to Japan's geographical location and potential industrial strength. Currently, the Soviet Union has about 500,000 ground troops and 5,000 to 6,000 fighters and other war planes deployed in the Far East. If the Soviet Union were to succeed in attacking northwestern Japan and establishing a beachhead through paratroopers and amphibious troops, it would be likely to attempt to bring a massive ground force to bear into the interior parts of Japan, establish air bases, and take control of the whole of Japan. We require 325,000 personnel to prepare for such a situation. There are few roads and bridges in Japan that tanks can drive through freely. For example, it is not easy for troops from Kyushu to move to Hokkaido. In that case, we would have to station forces of a certain strength in each area. For Japan, which is surrounded by the sea and has a long coastline (line of defense), the number of personnel required is naturally larger relative to its surface area.²⁹

In addition to the problem of the strength of the ground forces, there were also differences between Japan and the United States with regard to the balance of the composition of ground, maritime and air forces. Nash spoke only about ground forces and did not touch on maritime and air forces at all, which he was researching. The demands made by the United States on Japan's defense capabilities were centered on ground forces, and maritime and air forces served no greater purpose than that of complementing the ground forces. In contrast, Japan wanted to hold ground, maritime and air forces in a balanced way so as to prevent enemies from landing in Japan. To defend Japan, an island

²⁸ Japan received military assistance from the US based on the Mutual Security Act (MSA). The true objective of the MSA was for the Japanese Government, which did not wish to respond to requests for an increase in the strength of the defense force, to reinforce the strength of its forces to the target 325,000 personnel in exchange for the "reward" of receiving assistance (Masuda, *Jieitai no Tanjo* [The Birth of the Self-Defense Forces], pp. 59-65).

²⁹ The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Japan, October 9, 1953, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, Vol.14, Part 2: *China and Japan*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985, pp. 1523-1528; Otake (ed.), *Sengo Nippon Boei Mondai Shiriyoshu* [Collection of Materials on Japan's Postwar Defense Issues], Vol. 3, pp. 370-376; Yomiuri Shinbun Sengoshi-han (ed.), *Showa Sengoshi, "Saigunbi" no Kiseki* [Showa Postwar History, The Trajectory of Rearmament], p. 360; Miyazawa Kiichi, *Tokyo - Washinton no Mitsudan* [Confidential Talks Between Tokyo and Washington], Jitsugyo no Nihonsha, 1956, pp. 227-228.

state, maritime and air forces hold a crucial significance, and considering the difference in military power between the US and Soviet forces, Japan pointed out that there was no need to have a large ground force. In response, Nash argued that an aerial warfare with the Soviet Union was expected to be a fierce battle; once a beachhead was built and there was no resistance, the Soviet Union would be able to bring a large army to bear.³⁰ Japan sought an answer from the United States about its Far East strategy and Japan's share of responsibilities in the operations, but the United States evaded answering the question by stating that Japan should focus on ground defense.³¹

The ground forces demanded by the United States were based on the premise of a confrontation on the frontlines of the East-West confrontation on the European continent, and differed from Japan's ground forces that were restricted to only domestic activities. There was a large gap between Japan, which advocated a smaller defense force, and the United States, which advocated a large ground force, and negotiations were concluded without any clear agreements made. Ultimately, in consideration of Japan's situation, the difficult negotiations came to an end with a compromise by the United States. Japan agreed that it would receive US\$50 million (including a mechanism for allocating 20% of this to strengthening the economy) in exchange for an increase in ground defense personnel to 180,000 personnel, and the MSA agreement was signed on March 8, 1954, and entered into force on May 1 of the same year.³² However, this agreement contained mainly financial statistics rather than details on the duties and roles of the ground forces, and carried the implication that the National Safety Force whose main duty was defense would be transformed into a full-fledged military organization. As a result, Japan's rearmament was accelerated through the MSA agreement.³³

Another reason behind the precedence of ground forces in postwar rearmament was that Japan was not sufficiently equipped with aircraft and naval vessels due to its economic

³⁰ Otake (ed.), *Sengo Nippon Boei Mondai Shiriyoshu* [Collection of Materials on Japan's Postwar Defense Issues], Vol. 3, p. 372.

³¹ Nagasawa Isao, "Ikeda – Robatoson Kaidan to Boeiriyoku Zokyo Mondai (Ge): Rikujyo Jieitai 18-man Taisei no Seiritsu Jijo" [Ikeda-Robertson Talks and the Issue of Defense Force Reinforcement (Part 2): The Establishment of an 180,000-Strong Ground Self-Defense Force], *Kokubo* [National Defense], April 1979, p. 38.

³² *Yomiuri Shimbun*, February 14, 2015.

³³ Yoshitsugu Kosuke, "MSA Kosho to Saigunbi Mondai" [MSA Negotiations and Rearmament Issues] in Toyoshita Narahiko (ed.), *Anpo Joyaku no Ronri* [The Logic Behind the Security Treaty], Kashiwa Shobo, 1999, pp. 128-148; Yoshitsugu Kosuke, *Nichibeï Domei wa Ikani Tsukurareta ka: "Anpo Taisei" no Tenkanten, 1951-1964* [How was the Japan-US Alliance Established? The Turning Point of the Security System, 1951-1964], Kodansha Sensho Metier, 2011, pp. 34-38.

condition and GHQ's aviation prohibition policy. However, after Japan's rapid economic growth, the concept of "autonomous defense," which argued that Japan should possess defense forces that would match its increased economic power, gained influence, and Japan began to put effort into strengthening its maritime and air forces. While there were no changes to the United States' intentions of placing the emphasis on Japan's ground forces, NSC125/2, the policy toward Japan drawn up under the Truman administration in August 1952, set out the measure of establishing maritime and air forces.³⁴ Thereafter, successive violations of Japan's airspace over Hokkaido by Soviet aircraft during autumn of the same year led to efforts to train Japan's air force. However, the development of ground forces was not neglected. With the establishment of a policy for withdrawing ground troops under the Eisenhower administration, the development of the Ground Self-Defense Force became an issue of utmost importance for the United States. In truth, although Japan attempted to scale down its ground forces and turn its attention to the development of its maritime and air forces, its efforts were rejected by the United States, which demanded for compliance with the MSA agreement.³⁵ Japan complied with the MSA agreement as demanded by the United States, and established the desired 180,000-strong force in 1973, under the 4th Defense Program (1972 – 1977).

In this way, the development of Japan's ground forces after the war was the result of demands by the US Forces, rather than for the purpose of surviving the threats of the Soviet Union or enhancing national prestige. While adopting the official stance that it serves the purpose of defending Japan, in reality, it was a defense force that suited the needs of the United States for the implementation of its Far East strategy.

The United States did not expect Japan's ground forces to fight against enemy countries overseas, but rather, to protect Japan's territory as the foundation of the military strength that would enable the United States to conduct military operations safely. If a defense posture of Japan acting as a shield and the United States acting as a spear could be established, the United States did not want Japan to fulfill a role beyond that. However, the deployment of an armed Japanese ground force became an effective deterrent against the Soviet Union, which had inferior maritime and air forces as compared to the United

³⁴ NSC125/2, U.S. Objectives and Courses of Action with Respect to Japan, August 7, 1952, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, Vol. 14, Part2: *China and Japan*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985, pp. 1306-1307.

³⁵ Nakajima Shingo, *Sengo Nippon no Boei Seisaku: "Yoshida Rosen" wo meguru Seiji, Gaiko, Gunji* [Postwar Japan's Defense Policy: Politics, Diplomacy, and Military Developments Surrounding the "Yoshida Policy"], Keiogijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2006, p. 158.

States, by making it believe that it would be extremely difficult to invade Japan.³⁶ That was symbolized by the fact that the Self-Defense Forces during the Cold War era had been appraised as having a “meaning for its existence.”

Just as Japan was about to embark on its new journey as a maritime country, it was made by the United States to possess a large-scale ground force that was not suited to a maritime country. Furthermore, the “exclusively defense-oriented policy” and “basic defense force concept” had been established for the purpose of clarifying that Japan was adopting strategies in line with the United States’ strategy. Through these policies, the ground forces that lacked the awareness of a maritime country became norm regardless of changes in the strategic environment, and without either being augmented or reduced in size. Colonel Frank Kowalski, Chief of Staff of the GHQ’s Civil Affairs Section, wrote in his memoirs, “While Japan is concentrating all its technology and energy into economic expansion, we are attempting to treat Japan as an outpost of the United States or something to that effect. The United States is not aware that, rather than an outpost, it is far more appropriate to say that Japan is fulfilling the role of connecting Asia and the United States.”³⁷

The Self-Defense Forces, produced under the leadership of the United States without transparency in its objectives and process of establishment, faced many difficulties. Of these, voices were raised frequently within and outside the government, questioning defense capabilities that were biased toward ground forces and which did not leverage on Japan’s characteristic as a maritime country. For example, during the nuclear war era, there were criticisms that the Ground Self-Defense Force was of no use to Japan, and that the island state of Japan should be defended through a modernized air force and navy under the Japan-US Security Treaty. There were also others who felt that domestic security could be delegated to the police force, and there was no need for the Ground Self-Defense Force.³⁸

In July 1959 under the Kishi administration, a defense plan known as the “Akagi concept” was announced under Director-General of the Defense Agency Akagi Munenori. Based on the premise that the focus of defense plans should be shifted from ground forces to maritime and air forces, this concept sought to secure Japan’s autonomy

³⁶ Shibayama, *Nippon Saigunbi e no Michi, 1945-1954* [Road to Japan’s Rearmament, 1945-1954], p. 575; Asahi Shinbun (ed.), *Jieitai* [Self-Defense Forces], Asahi Shinbun, 1968, p. 89. Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro answered for the Budget Committee of the 98th House of Representatives Held on February 8, 1983, that Japan was the “shield,” and the US was the “spear.”

³⁷ Kowalski, *Nippon Saigunbi* [*An Inoffensive Rearmament*], p. 217.

³⁸ Sugita Ichiji, *Wasurerareteiru Anzenhosho* [Forgotten Security], Jiji Tsushinsha, 1967, pp. 140-141.

based on the premise of the Japan-US Security Treaty failing to function fully. However, the Akagi concept was widely criticized as being difficult to achieve financially, and was forced to undergo a complete review.³⁹ The setback faced by the Akagi concept was, in a sense, proof of the denial of the concept of autonomous defense, and showed clearly that the Japan-US Security Treaty formed the basis of the defense policy.⁴⁰

Thereafter, the theory advocating the superiority of maritime and air forces continued to be taken up frequently. Director-Generals of the Defense Agency Nakasone Yasuhiro and Kato Koichi, and Chairman of the Joint Staff Council Kurisu Hiromi, advocated the importance of maritime and air defense, and objected to the lack of consistency as well as competition between the three Self-Defense Forces. Nakasone, who was an advocate of autonomous defense, renamed the 4th Defense Plan as the New Defense Build-up Plan when he was serving as the Director-General of the Defense Agency (January 1970 – July 1971), and put forth a policy known as the “Nakasone concept.” Nakasone was critical of military armament biased toward ground forces on the basis that it would contribute to a scorched earth strategy and decisive mainland battles, and proposed the strengthening of maritime and air forces as well as the deployment of reconnaissance satellites. Prime Minister Suzuki Zenko asserted in 1982 that Japan should possess defense forces comprising mainly of air defense capability, as befits its nature as a maritime country, and instructed Director-General of the Defense Agency Ito Soichiro to undertake a review of the defense forces. The announcement of this view, known as the “hedgehog theory,” led to reviews of the 1981 medium-term defense build-up plan in July 1982 and August 1983. In the first item for the policy for the build-up of defense, the enhancement and strengthening of air defense capability, anti-warship capability, and amphibious defense capability that are adapted to a territory and topography that are surrounded by water on all fronts, was added for the first time. An emphasis on maritime and air forces, strengthening of missile systems, and high-speed craft measures were also incorporated. On the other hand, although the focus had been placed on building up ground forces during the period when Japan had been following the United States’ unilateral demands, the focus was shifted to the development of maritime and air forces as Japan’s defense burden was shared out and gained autonomy.

³⁹ Yoshitsugu, *Nichibei Domei wa Ikani Tsukurareta ka* [How was the Japan-US Alliance Established?], pp. 114-123; Nakajima, *Sengo Nippon no Boei Seisaku* [Postwar Japan’s Defense Policy], pp. 157-158.

⁴⁰ Sado Akihiro, *Sengo Seiji to Jieitai* [Postwar Politics and the Self-Defense Forces], Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2006, p. 69; Yoshitsugu, *Nichibei Domei wa Ikani Tsukurareta ka* [How was the Japan-US Alliance Established?], pp. 122-123.

The debate on autonomous defense became heated in this way, and activities of the Soviet Far East Army intensified. This strengthened the need for even closer Japan-US defense cooperation, and the priority was placed on developing maritime and air forces with a view to the surrounding areas, rather than on ground forces that were responsible for the defense of the territory. The Guidelines for Japan-US Cooperation, formulated in 1978, set out, as an important issue, preventing Soviet Backfire bombers and submarines from advancing toward the Pacific through cooperation between the US Navy and the Maritime Self-Defense Force. Japan, led by the Maritime Self-Defense Force, bore the responsibility of containing the Soviet Union. This was not limited to the framework of mainland defense, but also covered the Maritime Self-Defense Force's responsibility of defending 1,000 nautical miles of sea lane centered on Japan.⁴¹ As the peace-time duty of maritime and air forces was to watch over the territorial waters and skies, the reason for their existence and their roles was clearly manifested from peacetime. In contrast, the reason for existence and roles of ground forces as a deterrence force was not easily recognized during peacetime.

Against the background of the advocacy for the superiority of maritime and air defense in the first half of the 1980s, in order to respond to the criticism about the lack of a future vision, the Ground Self-Defense Force began to build up their capabilities to bolster deterrence for a global war scenario, rather than for an invasion by the Soviet Union alone. It evolved from the previous ground forces that had been developed in response to demands made by the US Forces, and in the second half of the 1980s, came up with the "northern forward defense strategy" on its own to neutralize the Soviet Union's "maritime fortress strategy" in the Sea of Okhotsk. Placing the emphasis on northern Japan, it changed the basis of defense operation from "endurance inland" to "offshore and shore destruction," and introduced armaments such as surface-to-ship missiles and multiple launch rocket systems. As a result, this strategy not only revived the value of ground forces, but also transformed the ground forces from a "two-party game" of Japan's solo defense against the Soviet Union, to one that would function as a part of the United States' global deterrence strategy, and contributed to the ending of the Cold

⁴¹ Sado Akihiro, "Nippon no Boei Seisaku to Nichibei Anzenhosho Taisei no Rekishiteki Tenkan: Shinkasuru Domei to Nipponboei Seisaku no Shomondai" [Japan's Defense Policy and the Historical Development of the Japan-US Security System: Issues of a Deepening Alliance and Japan's Defense Policy] in Ito Yukio and Kawada Minoru, *20-seiki Nippon to Higashi-ajia no Keisei* [Formation of the 20th Century Japan and East Asia], Mineruva Shobo, 2007, p. 198.

War.⁴² Japan was able to adopt such a defense strategy against the Soviet Union because of its geographical position close to the continent, and because the need to secure Japan's land functioned effectively in establishing the Sea of Okhotsk as a sanctuary and ensuring safe passage through the straits for the Soviet Union.

(2) The Post-Cold War Era

Partly due to political and legal constraints, Japan in the Cold War era was not actively involved in international conflicts. However, after the Cold War, events happening in places far out in the world began to have an impact on Japan's security. In addition to its conventional roles of deterrence and defense, ground forces took on stronger significance and roles as a symbol of Japan's national power in the wider field of security. It was called upon to fulfill the roles of actively creating "order" in the region through proactive engagement in international activities, and by responding to new threats and various situations such as the early recovery and maintenance of civilian life through deployment to provide assistance in the aftermath of large-scale disasters.

Ground forces have the roles of being a defense force for securing the safety of the country, and as a form of power for exerting influence on other countries. These roles and the scale of the roles differ depending on the role that the country places greater importance on. With limited defense resources, the allocation of power is an important issue for countries. Generally, the ground forces of continental countries with borders that are connected on land naturally prioritize security, while island states and maritime countries have comparatively greater flexibility in choosing whether to prioritize security or power. Moreover, the farther a country is from the continent, the greater flexibility it has; maritime countries such as the United States and Australia are able to hold ground forces that prioritize the role of power over security. However, Japan, with its unchanging geographical conditions and the need to confront significant threats that the East Asian region continues to face, has not been able to treat national defense lightly. Therefore, it is difficult for Japan to allocate its defense resources, and the burden on the troops has been gradually increasing. The realism of a country is reflected in the ground forces in such ways, and Japan has maintained its ground forces based on the national policy at the time. In that sense, ground forces have also been an indicator of Japan's national power and intentions.

⁴² See Nishimura Shigeki, *Boei Senryaku to wa Nanika* [What is the Defense Policy?], PHP Kenkyujo, 2012.

Currently, in addition to China's growing oceanic expansion, maritime security and offshore island defense have also been strengthened. In fact, it is also the ground forces that are taking on a central role in such developments. This is because it is possible to gain dominance on the seas through maritime forces if efforts are made to control a certain area of the seas and secure the safety of transportation routes. In addition, it is necessary to secure land that is connected to the waters, as well as the influence that comes from that. This is also the reason behind the increased strategic value of Japan's offshore islands that stretch across the East China Sea and the West Pacific. For the United States, which enjoys freedom of navigation in the Pacific, the influence it has gained with Japan's land as a bridgehead is enormous, and it is Japan's ground forces that are providing the defense for that. From the viewpoint of a continental country, the Japanese archipelago is the first region to traverse, and the land with which it is the easiest to gain influence, when advancing into the open ocean. In order for China to make the East China Sea and the West Pacific into its inland seas, the influence of the lands along the first island chain and the second island chain, including Japan, is indispensable. The land and the ground forces that defend that land still hold great significance and play an important role in preventing the monopolization of the seas by China.

To defend the offshore islands that are far from Japan's mainland, it is vital to project ground forces via the sea. While that is directed internally, it requires the same function as an expeditionary army, and cannot be implemented without strengthening Jointness. Furthermore, even for a small-scale ground force, passive deployment to the offshore islands play a major role in demonstrating Japan's sovereignty, and serves as a deterrence against invasion.

Conclusion

If there is continuity and commonalities between the prewar army and the postwar Ground Self-Defense Force, it would have developed through the unique characteristics of Japan's ground forces based on Japan's location on the eastern edges at the periphery of the Eurasian continent, and as an isolated island state; it is not impacted by the changing times. Japan has fulfilled the roles and suffered the fate as a frontline of sea power, in the area where land power and sea power confront each other, in order to deter land power from the continent. In short, Japan's location and territory itself have an innate and strategic value, and the ground forces play a leading role in protecting that territory. Consequently, in the case of Japan, although it is an island state, the general principle of "superiority of sea over land" is not necessarily applicable. The domains of sea, air, space,

and cyberspace as domains of security are now commanding attention in the modern times, but ground forces still hold the role of an important foundation in cross-domain operations and deployment. In that sense, Japan's land and its ground forces still have strong significance.

As described earlier, the social values and norms of any country are easily reflected in its ground forces. In particular, the actions of the Ground Self-Defense Force have been strictly restricted under the influence of strong social norms after the war. However, in the case of Japan, it is the geographical location for which the role of responding to threats can by no means be neglected in any era, from the prewar through to the postwar era. Soldiers in the prewar army and Self-Defense Force officers in the postwar era have accepted these characteristics and undertaken self-reform with a common sense of responsibility and mindset, and worked hard every day, while responding to the world of reality.

However, several issues remain for the future. These are, in particular, questioning the original significance and role, as well as the usefulness of military power based on the premise of ground forces, and the answer to that. To begin with, as we have learnt from the concept of "defeating the enemy without fighting them," which is the essence of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, it is good to avoid creating emergency situations and using military force. However, there is meaning for its existence based on the premise of military organization and the use of military force. Japan's ground forces after the war may have functioned as a deterrence force, but fortunately has never experienced the use of military force in an actual operation. All of its missions have primarily been deployment for disaster relief and international cooperation, which were non-military actions not accompanied by actual battles. Today, the trend of imposing a country's intentions on other countries using the ability of the military to kill and destroy is gradually weakening, not only for Japan's Self-Defense Forces. If we were to consider that the role of the military in the international community lies in non-military situations that are not accompanied by the use of force, has Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force been a model military organization that is on the cutting-edge of the world? No, the roles and usefulness of military force are ultimately based on the premise of the use of force. If that were to become futile, it would be necessary to redefine the significance and role of the military and military force.