

Foreword

The National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) held an international symposium on security affairs titled “Security Environment in the 21st Century and the Transformation of the Military” on January 20 and 21, 2004.

Today the world is confronted with a variety of difficult security issues including ethnic and religious conflicts, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the expansion of international terrorist networks. All nations are being compelled to transform their military forces into organizations capable of dealing with these difficult issues. They have recognized the importance of crisis management in addition to the traditional territorial defense, and are being forced to allocate more resources to crisis management mission within their restricted national resources for the military forces to take immediate and effective countermeasures against the various threats. All nations recognize that international cooperation is indispensable for handling these threats brought about by globalization, but they do not reach a consensus about desirable framework of international cooperation because of difference in the perception of threats (risks), national strengths, and national interests. While some nations consider issue oriented coalition of the willing very important, other nations believe it is possible for existent alliances to deal with various threats. And other nations respect the collective security system in accordance with the United Nations Charter. These differences in views on desirable framework of international cooperation affect transformation of their military forces.

This symposium was based on the above points and focused on: a) characteristics of security issues brought about by globalization, b) transformation of military forces to cope with new threats, and c) desirable framework of international cooperation necessary for coping with new threats. The symposium was divided into three sessions.

At the first session “Security Environment in the Asia-Pacific Region and the Transformation of the Military”, the views of Australia and China were presented. These two nations are different in terms of the size of their military and their power projection capabilities, and have extremely different stances on military alliances, the right of collective defense, and desirable framework of international cooperation, etc.

Professor Paul Dibb from the Australian National University presented the thesis that international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and other non-traditional threats are serious matters in Australia, and stated that Islamic extremists seriously threaten Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, the largest Islamic state in the world. Australia has strengthened the counter-terrorism capabilities of its military forces, and has reinforced its military forces with armaments necessary for their participation in overseas military operations done by multi-national forces. National defense mission,

however, remains important for the Australian military forces, and, as a result, they plan to reinforce their high-tech capabilities over the next ten years. Australia recognizes that it is the second most important US ally in the world after the United Kingdom, and is proactively participating in the anti-terrorism coalition of the willing led by the US.

Professor Chu Shulong from Tsinghua University stated that the Chinese security concept has become more comprehensive and less traditional since the Asian financial crisis. He indicated, however, that China still considers very important traditional security issues such as unification of sovereignty and territory, as seen in the Taiwan issue. China assumes that the conflicts they may deal with in the future will be local wars in which high-tech weapons are used. China aims to build up modernized military forces with high-tech armaments through the promotion of the transformation of its military forces. China uses both bilateral and multilateral approaches in security matters and attaches importance to international cooperation under the leadership of the United Nations.

At the second session “Security Environment in Europe and Russia and the Transformation of the Military”, the views of France and Russia were presented. European nations have virtually solved territorial defense matters and are shifting the focus of the military mission to crisis management. Russia is different from European nations in terms of security environment, and it does not yet take a clear position that attaches importance to its military’s crisis management mission due to its geopolitical conditions. Russia, however, faces serious terrorist threats by Islamic extremists and recognizes the importance of military posture that can effectively deal with these threats. Counter-terrorism cooperation between European nations and Russia has become important.

Dr. Yves Boyer, Assistant Director of the Foundation of Strategic Research, mentioned how we should understand the term “transformation”. He stated that the purposes of transformation are quick information processing and the reinforcement of information sharing. He indicated that transformation also aims to revolutionize the conception of warfare itself. He went on to say that the three key European military players, United Kingdom, France and Germany, take very seriously, from a military viewpoint, the need to remain co-operable with the US when the US is embarked in the transformation of its military forces, but he implied that transformation is so grounded in American military culture that applications and implications for Europe remain very limited. Finally, Dr. Boyer indicated that transformation would create discordance between the US and its European allies, thus generating centripetal force in Europe in the sense that UK, France and Germany will have enough weight to influence Washington only by achieving a convergence of their own views on military affairs.

Dr. Alexander G. Savelyev, Head of Department of Strategic Studies, Institute of World Economy and International Relations of Russian Academy of Sciences, stated that

since the end of the Cold War Russia has tried a military reform in order to adjust its military structure to the new security environment, but he went on to say that this reform is moving very slowly because it is not quite clear what kind of threat is considered by the Russian military to be more actual. The Russian military leaders maintain the view that while it is important to take measures against non-traditional threats, the level of probability of such threats remains uncertain and the demand for the Russian military is to be ready for military conflicts of any known type. Finally, Dr. Savelyev stated that it is difficult today to define clearly the potential enemy, the level of threat, the characteristic of future military conflicts, and the demands to the military in comparison with the Cold War period, but without defining clearly these matters real military reform will remain only on paper.

At the third session “The US-Japan Alliance and the Transformation of the Military in a Global Age”, the presenter from the US spoke about his perception of the characteristics of new security issues and about what counter-measures should the US take against these issues. The third session aimed to review the US-Japan alliance in the new security environment brought about by globalization.

Dr. Patric Cronin, Senior Vice President and Director of Studies, Center for Strategic and International Studies, outlined his outlook that the security issues in the next ten years will very likely be caused by weak governance, extreme ideologies, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and other multiple problems. He expressed his concern that it is more probable that small rogue non-state actors or terrorists will become involved with weapons of mass destruction as a result of globalization and therefore be in a position to threaten international security. The transformation of American military forces currently in progress to counter these threats to security has three aspects: technical reform, organizational reform, and tactical reform. This transformation has targets intended to review the conventional fixed bases and allocation of military power, and transform the military power into a more flexible and mobile force. The current transformation focuses on winning peace as well as preventing wars and gaining victory. It is necessary to structure the military forces in such a way that they can conduct preemptive actions, counter-terrorism actions and long-term nation building.

This report consists of the presentations at each session in both Japanese and English. We would be pleased if this report could be used as a reference when considering the ideal military forces and the ideal international cooperation necessary to deal with the new threats arising in the 21st century.